

Handbook for international researchers to Sweden



We are happy about your decision to come to Sweden and hope this handbook will help you in planning your stay!

Welcome to Sweden!

The information in this handbook is considered to be accurate and up-to-date as of March 2007. Please report any errors to info@researchinsweden.se. The information provided gives no right for claims or legitimate expectations of any kind. This document is continuously updated. Publisher: Mobility Centre Sweden. Editor: Eva Carnestedt.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Sweden is situated between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea and is the fifth largest country in Europe in terms of area. Sweden has 9 million inhabitants and is a long country, measuring 1,600 km. The best known period in Swedish history is probably the Viking Age.



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Swedish Institute.



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Stockholm Visitors Board.

Culture and Traditions

Living and working in a new country can be challenging in many ways. The day-to-day practical matters in your new home country can turn into an adventure. Living in a new culture can be exhilarating, personally rewarding, and intellectually stimulating, but it can also be frustrating. It is one thing to visit a country, moving on when you have seen enough, and it is quite another to live there to work and function according to a different, and sometimes, mysterious set of norms.

Swedes value their independence and privacy and that is why many visitors to Swedish work-places might find it difficult to get to know Swedes. By comparison to many other countries, however, you will find it quite easy to have access to top management as work hierarchy is less structured in Sweden. Casual dress is common in most work environments. Workers are entitled to at least 25 days of holiday per year, and people tend to use the majority of those days during the summer.

How do modern Swedes celebrate their traditional festivities? How are Swedish traditions today? Swedish journalist Po Tidholm presents a personal selection of customs and traditions celebrated in

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Sweden today. Background information about all the holidays and customs described in the book is provided by ethnologist Agneta Lilja.

Can be downloaded: www.sweden.se/traditions (Swedish institute)



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Photographer Nicho Södling.

Short facts

- Area: 450,000 km² (174,000 sq. mi.), third largest country in Western Europe
 - Forests: 53%
 - Mountains: 11%
 - Cultivated land: 8%
 - Lakes and rivers: 9%
 - Longest north-south distance: 1,574 km (978 mi.)
 - Longest east-west distance: 499 km (310 mi.)
- Capital: Stockholm
- Population: 9 million inhabitants
- Languages: Swedish; recognized minority languages: Sami (Lapp), Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedalen Finnish), Yiddish, Romani Chib (a Gypsy language).
- Form of government: Constitutional monarchy, parliamentary democracy.
- Parliament: The Riksdag, with 349 members in one chamber.
- Religion: 80% belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden.
- Average life expectancy: men 78 years, women 82 years.
- Most important export goods: Electrical and telecom equipment, machinery, passenger cars, paper, pharmaceuticals, iron and steel.
- Most important imported goods: Electrical and telecom equipment, machinery, foodstuffs, crude oil, textile products, footwear, passenger cars.

(Facts from Swedish Institute, www.sweden.se)

Some hints to understanding the Swedes 😊

- **Allemansrätten** is a unique tradition of "everyman's right". This means that you, on the condition that you do not intrude on the privacy of the owner, vandalise or litter, can hike freely in forests and fields, go swimming or boat on private water.
- **Be on time** for appointments.

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- Sweden is on **daylight saving time** like all other EU-states which means that the clock changes one hour in October and March.
- **Smoking** is not allowed in public places and not in restaurants/bars either.
- Sweden uses **summer time** like all other EU-states (clocks change in October and March).
- **Systembolaget** is the only shop where you can buy alcoholic beverages, it is closed on Sundays.
- **Tack**, thank you, is one of the most frequently used words in Swedish.
- **Take off** your shoes when entering somebody's home.
- **Queues** are common in cinemas, shops, banks, post-offices, etc. You are expected to stay in the line and not cut the queue. However, many institutions use queuing tickets. Collect a ticket and wait until your numbers shows on the display, then it is your turn.

Rosa, guest researcher from Universidad de León in Spain, says about:

Sweden: everybody keeps telling me that Sweden is much better in the summer and that Swedes become so different then. But I went to Sweden because I wanted to experience cold and snowy days!

Swedish language: they all speak English perfectly well. However, there are three compulsory words to learn for any visitor to Sweden: Hej (hello), Tack (thanks), Just det (that's right).

Swedish people: in the beginning they keep some distance and give an image of seriousness. They seem to be independent people. After some time the distance disappears. It is all perfect, I just wish I could stay longer. I'll be back!



More information about life in Sweden can be found at the Swedish Institute or from Swedish embassies.

Media

International newspapers can be bought in various news agents. Swedish and international newspapers can also be read for free at many libraries. In large cities there are a number of free newspapers in Swedish such as Metro and City. Foreign language films on Swedish TV are subtitled, and not dubbed, into Swedish which makes it easier for international visitors to watch TV!

Religions

Most of the population, about 85%, belongs to the Church of Sweden (Lutheran) from birth/christening. Since January 2000, the Church and the State are divided. Sweden has a large number of Free Churches as well. Members of various churches may find their own churches in the big cities.

Research in Sweden

Research and development have had high priority in Sweden in recent decades. Sweden is one of the countries that invests the largest percentage of its Gross Domestic Product in R&D. About 4% of GDP is put on Swedish R&D, putting the country number one among the 29 countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in terms of R&D investments as a percentage of GDP.

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The high standard of Swedish research is internationally recognised. Independent evaluations almost consistently give high marks to Swedish researchers and show that Swedish research pursued as part of European Union common programs is of high scientific quality.

The Nobel Prize is an international award given yearly since 1901 for achievements in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace. In 1968, the Sveriges Riksbank (Bank of Sweden) instituted the Prize in Economic Sciences in memory of Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prize. Each prize consists of a medal, personal diploma, and prize amount.

www.nobelprize.org

www.researchinsweden.se

www.forskning.se



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BEFORE COMING

Accommodation

Accommodation can be difficult to find in big cities. Check with your host institution if they provide housing or have good contacts. Another alternative is to advertise in a local paper or put up an advert on the notice board at your work place.

www.foretagsbostader.se/eng/

www.bostaddirekt.com/scripts/eng_master.phtml

Cost of living

To give you a brief idea of the cost of living in Sweden, some items have been listed below. However, it is only a guide as the cost depends on where in Sweden you live and, of course, how you live. This list is subject to change (updated in March 2007).

Beef: 70-140 sek/kg	Beer (low alcohol) 6-10 sek/33 cl	Bread: 10-20 sek/loaf	Cheese: 50-80 sek/kg
Chicken: 30-50 sek/kg	Cinema: 85-120 sek	Eggs: 2 sek/each	Lamb: 60-90 sek/kg
Milk: 8 sek/liter	Newspaper: 12 sek	Pasta: 10-20 sek/kg	Pork: 50-100 sek/kg
Rent of 2 room flat: 3-6000 sek/month	Rice: 30-35 sek/kg	Theatre: 50-400 sek	Underground in Stockholm: 600 sek/monthly ticket.
Water bottle: 5 sek/33 cl	Wine: from 55- sek/75 cl bottle*)		

*) bought at Systembolaget, the State liquor store.

Currency

The currency in Sweden is "krona/kronor", abbreviated "kr" in Swedish and SEK internationally. One krona is divided in to 100 öre. You can change money in banks and in exchange bureaux.

www.forex.se

Electricity

The voltage in Sweden is 230V AC, 50Hz.

Mobility Centre Sweden

The Mobility Centre Sweden gives on-line information for researchers to and from Sweden. It is a project funded by the European Commission under FP6. Your key to mobility:

www.researchinsweden.se

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Transportation

The public transportation system is quite good all over Sweden. The main airport, Arlanda, is situated between Uppsala and Stockholm. Skavsta airport 80 minutes south of Stockholm is fast becoming the country's second largest airport, and Bromma airport is centrally situated for flights within Sweden as well as to Brussels.

Weather – clothing

Sweden has four distinct seasons. So if you plan to come to Sweden for a year or more you will need many different kinds of clothes. It might be wise to buy the winter clothes and boots in Sweden. The Swedish climate is positively influenced by the warm Gulf Stream which means that it might be milder than you could expect at this latitude. Sweden is a long country and the weather varies a lot during the winter from north to south.

www.smhi.se/en/

Work and residence permits for EU-citizens

EU citizens have an automatic right of entry into Sweden. If you plan to stay longer than three months, you must register your right of residence with the Swedish Migration Board (you no longer need to apply for a residence permit, but. Necessary documents are certified copies of a work contract and passport (or ID card).

www.migrationsverket.se (Swedish Migration Board)

www.researchinsweden.se/residence (Mobility Centre Sweden)

Work and residence permits for non-EU citizens

For stays of 90 days or less, nationals of some countries need to have a visa before coming to Sweden. Check with the Swedish embassy in your home country. For stays of longer than 90 days, you must apply for a residence permit and work permit prior to your arrival in Sweden. The permit is entered in your passport. Contact the Swedish embassy or consulate in your home country.

www.migrationsverket.se (Swedish Migration Board)

www.researchinsweden.se/residence (Mobility Centre Sweden)

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UPON ARRIVAL

Banks

Banks are normally open Monday-Friday between 9.30 -15.00. Some offices have additional opening hours in late afternoon once a week. Banks are closed on weekends. Different banks have different conditions for opening an account. You will need your national registration number to open an account.

Trading hours

Quite common opening hours are Monday – Friday 10.00-18.00, Saturday 10.00-14.00. Large cities and big department stores have more generous opening hours.

Driving

Sweden has right-hand traffic. You have to be 18 and hold a driver's licence which you must carry with you whenever you drive. Sweden has very strict rules regarding driving and drinking. The police may stop a car at any time to have the driver taking a breathalyzer test. It is compulsory for both the driver, and passengers in the front as well as back seats of the car, to have their safety belts fastened. Dipped headlights are mandatory when driving, even in day-time. Car drivers have to give way for pedestrians and cyclists.

If you have a licence from your own country, you can use it for a maximum of one year in Sweden. All cars must have a red reflector warning triangle that you can display in the street in case of an accident or breakdown. The speed-limits are 30 km/h near schools, 50 km/h in the city, on minor roads 70km/h, on other roads 90 km/h and motorways 110 km/h. Keep an eye out for elks, reindeers and other wildlife when driving in the country-side.

www.vagverket.se (Swedish National Road Administration)



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Photographer Bengt af Geijerstam.

Emergency

The telephone number for fire, police and ambulance is 112. You will be asked to explain what has happened and from what number you are calling.

Health and medical care

If there is an emergency, you can go directly to an emergency ward at the closest hospital. For a medical appointment you could either contact the District Health Centre (Vårdcentral), the District Nursery (distriktssköterskemottagning) or a private clinic. Telephone numbers will be found under the blue pages in the telephone directory.

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If you need an interpreter at a medical appointment, you should notify the clinic in advance. If you are registered with the National Social Insurance Scheme, the social insurance will pay most of the cost when receiving medical treatment. Medical prescriptions have to be taken to a pharmacy (Apotek). In large cities there are normally some pharmacies that stay open every day of the year. Generally there are no vaccination requirements before entry to Sweden.

Insurances

If you are an EU-citizen and employed and salaried in Sweden, you are generally entitled to the social benefits from the first day of work. Members of your family are included in the insurance. EU-citizens can normally prove valid insurance by bringing their European Health Insurance Card.

www.forsakringskassan.se (Swedish Social Insurance Office)

If you come from country not in the EU, you should check if your home country has a mutual agreement with Sweden. Your local Swedish embassy can provide you with the current information. Contact your employer in Sweden to see what kind of insurances might be provided.

www.kammarkollegiet.se (the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency)

If you stay less than one year and are not an EU-citizen, you will need to have private health insurance. Insurance of personal belongings can be bought from any company listed under "Försäkringar" in the telephone directory.



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National registration number

If you plan to stay in Sweden for more than a year you must register with the local tax office within seven days of your arrival. When you have registered with the local tax office you will receive your national registration number (personnummer). This consists of your date of birth (year, month, day) and four extra digitals, e.g. 440901-110x. The national registration number is used for many purposes. People are registered by this number and not by names at many places such as hospitals, banks and it functions like a personal identification number. With this number you can apply for an identity card at the bank.

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News in English

It is quite easy to find news in English.

www.sr.se/international (Radio Sweden)

www.thelocal.se (Newspaper about Sweden in English)

Child care

Young children can be enrolled part- or full-time at pre-school (förskola or "dagis") from age 12 months. Sweden is rather unique - it promises a place at a dagis, or with a childminder (dagmamma), for every child until he or she is old enough to go to school.

Schooling

Schooling is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 16 years. There are nine grades all together. Contact your local municipality in Sweden to learn more about schooling in your neighbourhood. The university year consists of 40 weeks (2 semesters), starting in mid-August until mid-June.



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Photographer Sigge Persson.

Swedish language courses

Swedish is the official language and is spoken by about 9 million people in Sweden and approximately 300 000 Finnish nationals in Finland. English is the second language, so most people understand and speak English. The Swedish language belongs to the North Germanic branch of the Germanic languages, closely related to Danish and Norwegian. Depending on the location of your stay there are different options for learning Swedish while in the country. The Swedish institute offers some useful links: www.sweden.se. Courses in Swedish for immigrants (SFI) are provided by the local municipality.

Taxation

Foreign nationals, who live and are paid salary in Sweden, usually pay Swedish income tax instead of tax in their home country. Sweden has negotiated agreements with about 80 countries in order to avoid double taxation. The agreements vary considerably and information can be obtained from the tax authorities in you own country or in Sweden.

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Foreign key personnel - executives, experts, researchers, and others - may qualify for special tax relief when working in Sweden. The legislation provides an additional advantage to companies who need foreign expertise for their Swedish operations. www.skatteverket.se (Swedish Tax Office)

Telephone

When dialling abroad you start with 00 and thereafter the country code. The international country code for Sweden is 46.

Television

If you buy or rent a TV, it is compulsory to pay a licence fee. Notify the Broadcasting Corporation (Radiotjänst AB). www.radiotjanst.se.

MORE WEBLINKS

Information about Sweden

www.sweden.se (the official gateway to Sweden)

www.visitsweden.com (Swedish website for travel and tourism information)

www.sverigeturism.se/smorgasbord/index.html (the shortcut to Sweden)



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CHECKLIST

Before travelling to Sweden

Depending on your starting-point and background, there are several things you might need to arrange prior to your travel to Sweden.

- Is your passport valid?
- Do you need a visa, residence permit or work permit?
- Do you have a valid driving licence?
- Organise a health insurance certificate (EU-card, or equivalent).
- Do you need to arrange medical insurance?
- Do you have an insurance that covers your personal property?
- Arrangements for accompanying family members?

Upon arrival in Sweden

- Register at Migrationsverket.
- For civil registration, for tax purposes and to obtain a *personnummer* (personal number), contact your local tax office in Sweden (at the latest one week after your arrival).
- Open a bank account.
- Do you have a valid ID-card? Apply for one at the Svensk Kassaservice or bank.
- Register at the Social Insurance Office (*Försäkringskassan*). If you pay tax in Sweden, have a right of residence (or residence permit) and a personal number, the Social Insurance Office will contact you automatically for registration. You will be asked to send your residence permit, if you are non-EU, from the Migration Office and your personal number received from the Tax Office.

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SENTENCES IN SWEDISH

Although most Swedes speak good English, it is a good idea to learn a few words in Swedish.

Hej	Hello
Tack	Thank you
Visa mig på kartan var jag är	Please show me on the map where I am!
Nästa dag	Next day
Nästa vecka	Next Week
På återseende	Good-bye!
Tack så mycket	Thank you very much!
Tala långsamt	Speak slowly, please!
Talar ni engelska?	Do you speak English?
Ursäkta mig! Ingen orsak	I'm sorry! It's quite all right!
Det har jag ingen aning om	I have no idea!
Var finns det en toalett?	Where's the toilet?
Var kan jag finna en taxi?	Where can I get a taxi?
Var kan jag ringa?	Where can I make a phone call?
Var kan jag ställa bilen?	Where can I park the car?
Var ligger turistbyrån?	Where's the tourist office?
Var ligger närmaste sjukhus?	Where's the nearest hospital?
Var kan jag finna ett apotek?	Where is there a pharmacy / chemist's?
Jag ber om ursäkt	I'm sorry
Jag förstår inte	I don't understand
Kan ni hjälpa mig?	Could you help me, please?
Det är bra	That's good
God dag!	Good day!
God kväll!	Good evening!
God morgon!	Good morning!
God natt!	Good night!
Hur mycket är klockan?	What time is it?
Hur mår ni?	How are you?
Har ni något ledigt rum?	Have you got any vacancies?
Vad sägs om en kopp kaffe, hemma hos mig	How about a cup of coffee at my place
En flaska	a bottle of
En kopp	a cup of
Ett glas	a glass of
Får jag be om	Could I have, please?
Får jag prova	May I try on, please?
Hur långt är det till	How far is it to?
Jag är	I am
Mitt namn är	My name is
Talar ni ...?	Do you speak ...?
Var ligger ...?	Where is ...?
idag	Today
imorgon	Tomorrow
igår	Yesterday
Vad kostar det?	How much is it?
Höger	Right
Vänster	Left
Rakt fram	Straight on
Jag vet inte	I don't know
Rökning förbjuden	No smoking
Flygplan	Aeroplane
Tåg	Train
Buss	Bus/coach
Lexikon	Dictionary

Source: www.sverigeturism.se