Visit Sweden News Room

News from Sweden: Holidays & Happenings

Sweden is a special place to enjoy the holiday season with traditional markets popping up throughout the country, light festivals, traditional Lucia processions, Northern Lights, and much more. With news of the return of United Airlines' nonstop daily seasonal service to Stockholm from New York, a trip to Sweden is even more accessible. Visit Sweden's online travel inspiration tool ´Experience Guide´ is now also available in English for the first time, providing you with the best activities, restaurants, and hotels based on your location. Learn more below and see our tips on a few special places and activities to enjoy an authentic holiday in Sweden.

New Flights from the US To Sweden
United Airlines has announced the return of its nonstop daily seasonal service between Stockholm Arlanda Airport and its New York/Newark hub from May 28, 2023. The airline is returning to the Swedish capital for the first time since 2019, having previously operated the route for 14 years from 2005.

> United Airlines Daily Nonstop Service Between Stockholm and New York Returns for 2023 | Swedavia (mynewsdesk.com)

Sweden's Festive Holiday Markets

Usher in the festive season by visiting a Swedish Christmas market, offering quality handmade products, tasty food, and fun activities. You'll find some of our favorite holiday markets in unique UNESCO locations, larger cities, and small towns alike.

Whichever part of Sweden you happen to visit, you're likely to find an authentic Christmas market with plenty of high-quality products that make ideal gifts. The handicraft tradition is strong in Sweden, and you'll find everything from Christmas decorations and hand-knitted mittens to stylish jewellery.Christmas-themed food and drink complete the experience. While wandering among the decorative stalls, make sure to enjoy the winning combination of a steaming cup of 'glögg' (mulled wine) and a 'pepparkaka' (gingerbread).

Below is a selection of holiday markets in Sweden - from Swedish Lapland in the north to Skåne in the south.

Gammelstad, Swedish Lapland

For one weekend, the open-air museum Hägnan at Luleå's UNESCO World Heritage SiteGammelstad Church Town arranges its traditional Christmas market. Housed in and around the former farm buildings, some 70 exhibitors focused on craftsmanship will offer everything from homemade delicacies to books. Visitors can also meet Santa Claus and Mrs Claus, listen to fairy tales, and go for a horse-drawn sleigh ride.

Jamtli, Jämtland

This traditional Christmas market in Östersund is located at Jamtli Museum – also known as Sweden's Christmas Museum. Wander around the snow-covered historical buildings, admire more than 200 vendors of genuine handicrafts and locally produced delicacies or go for a sleigh ride. If you're lucky, you might even meet the Jamtli Santa. The super-sized Advent Calendar with new surprises every day is also worth a visit.

Skansen, Stockholm

The open-air museum Skansen, located in Stockholm's Royal Djurgården (a national city park), is a major Swedish attraction. Its historic Christmas market has been a calendar highlight since 1903. Stroll around the stalls and stock up on traditional Christmas food and handicrafts made by local artisans on-site. Kids will love all that Skansen has to offer – from meeting the resident animals to participating in craft workshops.

Stortorget, Stockholm Old Town

Few holiday markets are as atmospheric as Stortorgets Julmarknad, housed in Stockholm's Old Town (Gamla Stan). This

traditional Christmas market was started in 1837 and is the oldest in Sweden. Spreading across the beautiful square Stortorget, a range of Swedish Christmas sweets and other seasonal delicacies are served up alongside various craft items, from iron works to ceramics.

Lisberg Amusement Park, Gothenburg

Sweden's largest holiday market with approximately 500,000 visitors and some eighty shops, winter rides, and restaurants serving Christmas delicacies. At night-time the amusement park is beautifully illuminated with Christmas lights where every lamp is LED, which is a more energy efficient option. There is also an ice rink, where you can rent skates, skate with Julius the rabbit, and enjoy a hot chocolate at the rink-side bar. Kids and families can visit Santa's workshop to give their Christmas wish list to Santa in person.

Eksjö, Småland
Travel 100 years back in time by visiting the traditional Christmas market inEksjö. The market takes place in the wooden town center, and vendors offer everything from homemade candles and silversmith goods to marzipan, and marmalade. The holiday market ends with a festive fire show.

Gustav Adolfs Torg in Malmö, Skåne

The major city of Malmö hosts a number of holiday markets. The cozy fair in Gustav Adolfs Torg is a definite highlight, transforming the town square into a sparkling, festive wonderland, complete with carol singers. Alongside music and live performances, you'll find stalls selling local handicrafts, as well as classic Swedish Christmas food and drinks.

Learn more:
> https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/culture-history-and-art/swedish-traditions/christmas/christmas-markets-sweden/

Nobel Week Lights
Nobel Week Lights Stockholm is a light festival that takes place during the Nobel Week in December and is free for everyone. Directly inspired by Nobel Prize-winning discoveries, works of art illuminate Stockholm's darkness. These artworks and installations invite visitors to explore the city and the urban environment with new eyes, while learning more about Nobel laureates and their contributions.

> https://nobelweeklights.se/?lang=en

Experience the Old Swedish Tradition of Lucia – Bearer of Light, Hymns and Swedish Treats
Lucia Day - on December 13, Swedes celebrate Santa Lucia, a tradition in which Lucia brings light to the winter. The candlelit Lucia procession is perhaps one of the more strange-looking Swedish customs, with children as well as adults clad in white full-length gowns singing songs. The Lucia tradition is as integral to Swedish culture as midsummer and crayfish parties. Immensely atmospheric, this 400-year-old custom brings peaceful joy each year on December 13 – and it's spreading across the world.

Learn more:
> https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/culture-history-and-art/swedish-traditions/christmas/lucia/

Sweden´s NEW ´Experience Guide´ - Now Available in English
Visit Sweden's popular online travel inspiration tool, the 'Experience Guide', which uses geolocation technology to find good places to eat, stay, and explore is now available in English:

>https://visitsweden.se/en/upplevelseguide

The Northern Lights & 11 Other Breathtaking Natural Wonders in Sweden
From the highest coastline in the world to a hidden freshwater archipelago – Sweden has plenty of natural wonders just waiting to be explored. Some natural wonders are so incredible that it can be hard to believe that no one else than Mother Nature herself is behind them. In ancient times they were often explained with supernatural forces. Sweden has a strong tradition of folkloric tales where mythological creatures played a central role in shaping nature.

The Northern Lights (also called Aurora Borealis)
The Vikings believed this spellbinding natural phenomenon to be the Valkyries taking fallen soldiers to meet Odin, while the Sámi – the indigenous people of Sweden – thought the lights were the souls of the dead. If you disrespected the souls by dancing or singing, the light would dip down and carry you off to the afterlife. Even though we know today that the Aurora Borealis appears as solar particles collide with gases in the earth's atmosphere, it's still an eerie and entrancingly beautiful experience.

The swirling kaleidoscope of the Northern Lights is often referred to as the greatest light show on earth. Streaks of greens, reds, and purple snake across the night sky, as if dancing to unheard music. This spellbinding natural phenomenon is usually seen in northern Sweden from late September until early April. However, a solar cycle forecasted to peak in July 2025, is already greatly increasing the chances to spot the Northern Lights both earlier and further south. All you need to do is to keep track of the Aurora forecasts, head out to a preferably dark place and look up into the starry night.

Learn more about the other 11 breathtaking natural wonders in Sweden below:
> https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/nature/natural-wonders/

Stockholm to Host the 2024 Global Sustainable Tourism Council World Congress
It has been revealed that the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which was initiated by, among others, the UN, has chosen to hold their world congress in Stockholm, Sweden on April 23-25, 2024. Why GSTC has chosen Sweden for the congress is partly because Sweden has a proven and purposeful track record of working with sustainability and already has several destinations that work, or want to start working, according to GSTC's criteria for sustainable tourism. Sweden has also been ranked as the most sustainable destination in the world two years in a row, according to international research firm Euromonitor International's Sustainable Travel Index.

Learn more:
> World Congress for Sustainable Tourism hosted by Sweden in 2024 - Visit Sweden (cision.com)

For press images, see: https://imagebank.sweden.se/

For more information or additional press images:
Melinda Martino, Visit Sweden
melinda.martino@visitsweden.com, cell: (+1)-917-340-9330

About Visit Sweden
Visit Sweden has been given an official assignment from the Swedish government to market Sweden as a tourist destination. Our vision is that Sweden by 2030 is the world's most sustainable and attractive travel destination built on innovation. Now more than ever, purposeful travel needs to be meaningful, conscious, and create lasting value for our guests, the local community and our planet. Welcome to Sweden.
www.visitsweden.com

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