What are the secrets to a longer life?

As you will have seen, Sweden recently featured in a new BBC TV show which looked at the secrets to a longer lifePaddy McGuinness and Chris Harris recently visited the country to find out how our European neighbours grow old gracefully and make their years ahead the best yet. Here are our top tips on how to experience the Swede´s secret on your next holiday to Sweden.

Sweden is highly recognised for its quality of life and happiness. It consistently ranks among the top countries in various global indices and surveys* like the Quality of Life Index, Best Countries to Live In and the Global Happiness Index. With an average male lifespan of 81 years (Source: Statistica), ahead of that in the UK, what can we do, if just for a week or two, that might add days to our lives and help us be more Swedish.

Allemansrätten

The right of public access is ingrained in every Swede's psyche. The enjoyment gained by freely spending time, anywhere in nature so long as a few respectful guidelines are followed. Don´t look for big signs welcoming you to the forest or the footpath, you won´t find them because you´re already welcome. So go for that walk, find a lake and go for a swim, stumble across one of the thousands of picnic spots with a stocked firepit and wind shelter just inviting you to grill a hotdog and relax.

More info: https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/nature/sustainable-and-rural-tourism/the-right-of-public-access/

Press images: https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/27cq2x7k6o

Spending time living close to nature

Studies have demonstrated that exposure to green surroundings can alleviate stress, boost mood, enhance creativity, and improve cognitive functions. Whether it involves a stroll through a park, gardening, or simply enjoying a natural landscape, integrating more green into our daily lives can profoundly improve mental health.

From rustic eco-lodges and historic cabins to floating hotels and modern glamping – the Swedish landscape is scattered with unique close-to-nature places to stay.

Discover the luxury of going off-grid and enjoy the sound of silence while leaving as few footprints as possible. Here are just a few:

Swedish Country Living in West Sweden, offers several types of accommodation overlooking a lake at the forest's edge on ancient time-honoured pastureland. The off-grid wooden hermitage cottages with Scandinavian interiors are the most petite, perfect for a tranquil back-to-nature break. In 2021, Swedish Country Living was awarded Sweden's Best Sustainability Experience by the 360° Eat Guide.

Inforest - For a close-to-nature experience without neighbours in West Sweden, stay off-grid in a tiny house with minimal climate impact in the deep forests outside Hjo. Four hand-built and self-sufficient cabins with large windows reinforce the feeling of being in the middle of the woods. Guests are recommended to stay four to seven nights to unwind and enjoy nature to the fullest.

Experience an authentic close-to-nature stay in a historic pasture cottage in the forests of Dalarna at **Wålstedts Gård**. Upon arrival at this family-run and KRAV-certified eco-farm, you'll receive directions and a packed lunch to enjoy during the 4-kilometre-long hike to the pasture cottage. The cottage is in a forest glade, and the earth cellar is filled with homemade food you can cook over an open fire.

Hidden among the trees on the shores of Lake Eldanin Värmland,**Naturbyn** ('The Nature Village') offers hand-built log cabins, cottages, treehouses and even wooden houseboats. Ideal for a complete detox, this is an off-grid resort with the sights and sounds of nature providing entertainment. Relax in the wood-fired sauna before taking a dip in the lake. Or join a fishing trip and cook your catch on one of the open fires dotted around the camp.

Even though it's the oldest mountain hotel in Sweden,**Fjällnäs** in Jämtland, works with the most modern technology to

minimise the use of resources. The hotel, with its traditional wooden buildings, has welcomed guests since 1882 – while the surrounding nature has been untouched since the last ice age. Here, 10 kilometres from Tänndalen, you live in symbiosis with nature and its eight unique seasons.

Peace & Quiet Hotel in Swedish Lapland - situated in old pine and spruce forests and surrounded entirely by the pristine, untouched wilderness of the Lule River close to the border of Laponia world heritage in the remote municipality of Jokkmokk, a part of Swedish Lapland. Accessible only by dogsled, snowmobile, boat or trail the journey to Peace & Quiet hotel gives you the true feeling of departure from your daily life. You will have an unforgettable experience of Sápmi, the land of the Sámi people, and its wildlife.

More information: https://visitsweden.com/where-to-stay/unique-accommodation-close-nature-sweden/

Press images: https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/20v66rbmcm

Incorporate soft adventure into your life

All the excitement, none of the effort. Swedes take time for a little soft adventure, be that time outdoors in nature, doing some gentle exercise, taking some ´me-time´ in the sauna or with a swim in the lake. These are all things we can easily start to enjoy on a holiday in Sweden too. Holidays don't have to involve strenuous hikes or battling harsh weather.

Whether it's summer's height or winter's chill, you can always unwind at a city spa or sauna, ranging from the traditional to the ultra-modern. Rent a kayak and explore quaysides from the water, or cycle through forests, historic districts, parks and, beside canals, all without leaving the city.

In Stockholm and Gothenburg, you can hop on a ferry and, within an hour, enjoy a waterside lunch on a picturesque island. During winter, many cities offer easy access to cross-country skiing or ice-skating.

More information on soft adventures in Sweden -https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/soft-adventures-all-the-adventure-less-effort/

More information on canoeing and kayaking in the land of lakes, rivers and archipelagos -https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/canoeing-and-kayaking/canoeing-kayaking/

Sweden – a paradise for cycling -https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/biking/sweden-a-paradise-for-cycling/

From train to trail – accessible hiking in Sweden -https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/hiking/from-train-to-trail-accessible-hiking-in-sweden/

Press images: https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/68tkrhlge

Nordic Nirvana – Swedish spa and sauna rituals

Sauna is a tradition deeply rooted in Swedish culture up north and is a rising trend elsewhere in Sweden. There are 300,000 saunas across the country, providing a place for social exchange between families, partners and friends.

Did you know:

- There are 275 places in Sweden with the word ‘sauna’ (‘bastu’ in Swedish) in their name.
- Sweden has a National Sauna Day. It was established by the Swedish Sauna Academy, and in 2024 will take place on 8th June.
- In 1725, Sweden made it illegal to visit saunas as it was seen as sinful and as a breeding ground for syphilis. The ban has never been officially lifted, but it’s not something anyone cares about today.

Wellness and spa culture is rooted in Swedish tradition, dating back to the fifth century. Providing holistic balance, relaxation and well-being, it’s something even the pillaging Vikings enjoyed, and many spa hotels and resorts are perfectly located in beautiful areas of the Swedish countryside. So why not incorporate some relaxation and balance into your holiday?

18 of the best spas in Sweden- https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/spa-wellness/spa-resorts-and-sauna-rituals/

Press images: https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/61gha7aen

Fika like a Swede

As Swedish as ABBA, fika is another wonderful custom, ingrained in the psyche of every Swede, that of taking time for a coffee and cake with a friend.

People of all ages and genders enjoy fika casually at work with colleagues or plan it as an outing with friends at the weekend. “Let’s do fika,” is one of the most uplifting messages you can receive from a friend, with the social aspect being the key here since a spot of fika can be therapeutic, promoting wellbeing and productivity.

The poet, John Donne wrote, “No man is an island” and Swedish fika certainly encourages human connection, something vital to our wellbeing and contentment as we progress through our years.

More information on how to fika like a Swede -https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/food-drink/swedish-kitchen/all-about-swedish-fika/

Press images: https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/1n5laadat

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- **Quality of Life Index**: Sweden is often highlighted as one of the best countries for quality of life. According to the 2024 Quality of Life Index by World Population Review, Sweden ranks very high in areas such as sustainable development, freedom, environmental performance, and happiness levels, although the cost of living is relatively high (World Population Review) (Global Citizen Solutions).
- **Best Countries to Live In**: Sweden is frequently listed in the top ten for the best countries to live in due to its strong social support systems, economic stability, safety, and robust healthcare and education systems. For example, it ranks high in affordability, safety, and overall well-being (World Population Review) (Social Saver X).
- **Happiness Index**: Sweden also performs well in global happiness reports. The focus on work-life balance, strong social equality, excellent healthcare, and comprehensive education systems contribute to the high levels of happiness reported by its residents (Global Citizen Solutions).

These recognitions are supported by Sweden's commitment to social welfare, environmental sustainability, and progressive policies on education and healthcare, making it a desirable place to live and visit.

Visit Sweden

Visit Sweden has an official assignment from the Swedish government to market Sweden as a destination. Our vision is that Sweden by 2030 is the world's most sustainable and attractive destination built on innovation. Now more than ever, purposeful travel needs to be meaningful, conscious and creating lasting value with regard to our guests, the local community and our planet.

Welcome to Sweden, a destination of a different nature.

https://corporate.visitsweden.com/om-oss/en/

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Additional assets available online: Photos (2)

https://press.visitsweden.com/2024-05-30-What-are-the-secrets-to-a-longer-life