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Come to Sweden and Bara Bada Bastu – One in Three British Travellers Want Just That

This year's Eurovision Song Contest puts Sweden's vibrant sauna culture in the spotlight with the song *Bara Bada Bastu* ("Just Take a Sauna") – a rousing declaration of love from Swedish-Finnish comedy group KAJ for one of the most cherished rituals in Swedish life: the sauna. The soothing heat of the sauna combines wellbeing, centuries-old tradition and a love of nature that is as essential to Swedes as *fika* – the iconic Swedish coffee break. Interest in saunas and cold bathing is also on the rise. Below are some of Sweden's most spectacular sauna experiences – perfect for those who want to immerse themselves in the spirit of this year's most sauna-friendly Eurovision chorus.

Sauna Interest Is Heating Up – Especially Among the British

Sauna bathing is booming – a trend closely linked to growing interest in wellbeing, health and carving out 'me time'. Between April 2021 and March 2025, global interest in saunas increased by an astonishing 108 per cent, according to the MyTelescope Index.* Online searches for terms such as "sauna benefits" and "home sauna" have surged.

In 2024 alone, international Google searches for saunas in Sweden rose by 47 per cent** compared to the previous year. **Among the top sources of this interest was the UK, which saw a 63 per cent increase** – ranking just behind sauna-enthusiasts, Sweden and Finland.

Wellness is clearly becoming a key part of British travel preferences, with **over one in three UK travellers (35%)*** now seeking to combine their Swedish holidays with spa, wellness or retreat experiences.**

Sauna, Cold Bathing, Nature, Happiness – The Swedish Way of Life

In Sweden, the sauna – or bastu – is more than a moment of relaxation. It is a beloved institution, passed down through generations. Whether it's to recharge, connect with others or simply enjoy nature, the sauna is so treasured in Sweden that it even has its own holiday: National Sauna Day, celebrated on the second Saturday of June – this year, 14th June.

Where there is the warming, health-giving sauna, a revitalising cold plunge is usually nearby – a cherished tradition in its own right. Sweden's first cold bathing house (kallbadhus) opened as early as the 1800s, and today, kallbad (cold bathing) is so deeply rooted in Swedish culture that it is officially recognised as part of the nation's Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Why Do Swedes Love Saunas So Much?

For the body: enhanced circulation, muscle relaxation, and immune system support.

For the mind: reduced stress, improved mood and sleep, and guaranteed disconnection.

For togetherness: whether with friends, family or colleagues, the sauna is a space where everyone is equal.

For nature: many saunas are paired with a refreshing dip in a lake, river or the snow.

Those looking to move from theory to practice should head to Sweden, where saunas are found across the country – from rustic, wood-fired retreats to luxurious design-led oases, in the heart of nature or right in the city, where nature is never far away.

Sweden Hosts Its First Classic Sauna Aufguss Championship – Helsingborg, May 2025

From 23rd to 25th May 2025, Helsingborg will host Sweden's first national final for Classic Aufguss. The event will take place at the historic Kallis cold bathhouse, where sixteen Aufguss masters will compete for a place at the Nordic Championships in Copenhagen. (Press images: HERE)

Classic Aufguss – a bastu tradition with German roots – features the skilled use of aromatic oils and artistic towel techniques

to intensify and enhance the sauna experience.

With three cold bathhouses and a thriving sauna culture celebrated annually during Kallbadsveckan (Cold Bath Week), Helsingborg has established itself as one of Sweden's top destinations for cold bathing.

Sweden's 10 Most Beautiful Places for Sauna and Cold Bathing

Across the country, visitors can enjoy extraordinary sauna and cold bathing experiences – from rustic, wood-fired cabins nestled in the countryside to elegant, design-led sanctuaries on lakeshores and by the sea.

The award-winning sauna in Jubileumsparken, Gothenburg: Overlooking the Göta River, this architectural gem is located in Gothenburg's Frihamnen. The sauna is built from recycled materials and is next door to Hamnbadet with three pools, one of which is open all year round for those who like a refreshing cold swim. The sauna is free of charge and needs to be booked online in advance.

The floating sauna in Stocksund, Stockholm: Marvel at Stockholm´s archipelago while enjoying a wood-heated sauna, combining relaxation and sublime landscapes. A sun terrace with awning and seating allows you to enjoy the fresh air. Drinks and snacks are available on request.

The work of art that is Solar Egg in Kiruna, Swedish Lapland: This golden, egg-shaped sauna and artwork has travelled the world for seven years, now returning to its original home in Kiruna. Designed by Swedish artists Bigert & Bergström, Solar Egg symbolises rebirth and creativity. Enjoy a classic snow roll to cool off after the sauna! Book it by emailing Kiruna Bryggeri.

The NEW sauna with a view of Denmark, Kallbadhus in Landskrona, Skåne: Inaugurated in March 2025 and installed at the end of a 300-metre-long wooden jetty, this "Cold bath centre" includes a sauna with spectacular views of Öresund and Denmark from an elegant glass structure. Press photos HERE.

The eco-certified design experience at Arctic Bath in Harads: A floating spa hotel with a circular outdoor pool at the heart of the building: Arctic Bath combines luxury with magnificent nature. Built floating on the Lule River, this unique building offers waterfront experiences during the summer and is surrounded by ice in the winter, perfect for those looking for a combination of heat and cold. For an extra memorable stay, Arctic Bath hosts the Fire and Ice event, where sauna, cold bathing and carefully selected culinary experiences merge. Press photos: HERE

The sacred space at Kukkolaforsen on the Swedish/Finnish border: In the kingdom of the sauna and whitefish at Kukkolaforsen, on the very border between Sweden and Finland, they celebrate their common sauna tradition. Discover 13 different saunas – from classic wood-fired variants to a traditional smoke sauna. Experience what has long been regarded as sauna´s sacred space — the "church of nature." Central to the ritual is löyly, the spirit or steam released when water is poured over a stack of heated stones. On 13th-15th June, join the National Sauna Day celebrations.

The underground sauna at Äventyrsgruvan in Dalarna: located at a depth of 80 meters in a former mine. Surrounded by natural rock walls, the warmth of the steam contrasts with the chill of the mine´s clear turquoise water. This unique sauna adventure lasts about three and a half hours and includes a meal.

T**he Most Beautiful - Kallbadhuset Varberg in Varberg, one of Sweden´s most beautiful:**Kallbadhuset Varberg, is a wooden palace in Moorish style that rests on stilts over the sea. Since 1903, this historic gem has offered classic saunas combined with refreshing dips in the sea. With a magnificent view of The Kattegat and nearby Varberg Fortress, Kallbadhuset offers an idyllic coastal experience filled with tradition and charm. Press images: HERE

The underwater sauna in Ästad Vingård, Halland: The sauna is part of the "Sinnenas Spa" (Spa of the Senses) and uses scents, sounds, materials and atmospheres inspired by the nature reserves that surround the Ästad vineyards. It offers a unique view thanks to its bay windows that allow you to observe the rainbow trout and crayfish of the pond. Press images: HERE.

The world's largest sauna in Cape East in Haparanda, Norrbotten: The sauna, whose design is inspired by a Mayan temple, has ten rows of benches on different levels that can accommodate up to 150 people. On the upper level, it is possible to relax in the heated pool area on the terrace while admiring the Finnish border. On the lower level, experience ice baths, hot water pools and a waterfall shower with ice water. The must: take up the challenge of the "torture of the Tornio Valley", trying to stay on the highest bench where the temperature reaches 100 degrees Celsius!

*Source: My Telescope Index https://app.mytelescope.io/share/dashboard/btXvjm3A8PBChdXQXaEJ?dateRangeId=ShdjU9z4ZpraeI2EPI7A

**Source: Refers to the development of the number of travel-related Google searches for Sweden & sauna, Bloom Consulting, *D2 Digital Demand © 2024 report

*** Source: Mågruppsanalys 2024, VisitSweden/YouGov

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