Visit Sweden News Room

Sweden, the world's first travel destination on prescription

A new research-backed initiative sees physicians recommending trips to Sweden for the health benefits.

Stockholm, 23 September 2025: A sauna in Swedish Lapland for better sleep quality, or cold plunges in the archipelago for improved circulation? Two out of three respondents in a new international survey would be open to spending more time in nature if a doctor prescribed it. Now, Sweden is positioning itself as the world's first country to which travel can be prescribed by a doctor

Watch how experiences in Sweden can boost health

The new global survey*, commissioned by Visit Sweden and conducted by YouGov, revealed that a majority of respondents had not heard about nature, cultural or social prescriptions. But it also brings to light that nearly two out of three would be open to following them.

"Nature, social settings and culture have restorative powers, and evidently, Sweden has these assets in abundance. I would welcome discussing with my patients how Swedish nature and lifestyle could benefit their health – and am open to prescribing a visit there if my patients request it", says Stacy Beller Stryer, Associate Medical Director at ParkRXAmerica.

Nature plays a crucial role in human health and well-being,says the World Health Organisation (WHO). And medical prescriptions to spend time in nature, so-called nature prescriptions, have been increasing as a preventive healthcare strategy, with studies showing benefits for physical and mental health – similarly for social and cultural prescriptions.

"We have made great strides in making the social prescription a more integral part of public health in the UK – but there is still so much more to be done. I welcome Sweden's initiative and hope it will help break down institutional and organisational barriers, ultimately benefiting all patients", says London-based GP, Dr Sam Everington.

With its extensive forests providing easily accessible space for a soothing forest bath, acapital boasting the cleanest air in Europe, and clean lakes for taking cold plunges that enhance blood circulation, global indices consistently rank Sweden very high for its natural environment and lifestyle. An opportunity to highlight how travelling there on a nature, social or cultural prescription can boost health and wellbeing.

"The Swedish lifestyle naturally promotes wellbeing - from the free access to our stunning forests and lakes, to the fresh air, cooler summers, wholesome fika breaks and our vibrant cultural life", says Susanne Andersson, CEO at Visit Sweden.

The Swedish Prescription - how it works

A research-backed destination prescription programme has been curated and made available atvisitsweden.com. The programme is based on three intervention themes: nature, culture and social prescribing. The health benefits of each activity presented have been reviewed by Yvonne Forsell, senior professor at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden, one of the world's leading medical universities.

Also online, patients around the world can nowdownload a medical referral to support an application to their General Practitioner, and benefit from a restorative experience in Sweden that could improve their health. For instance, picking cloudberries in the forest to lower blood pressure or sleeping under a starry sky on anisland in the archipelago to help regulate the circadian rhythm.

GPs can now generate a prescription and advise patients to spend time in Sweden.General Practitioners/Doctors have been identified who are ready to issue such a prescription when appropriate. For patients who choose to visit, Sweden, together with doctors, has curated three medical programmes that patients can benefit from: nature, social, arts and culture.

But be aware, side effects may include a heightened desire for cinnamon buns and friluftsliv.

What the US and UK research tells us

In the United States, 64% of adults said they had never heard of a nature prescription. 21% had heard of it but had never

been prescribed one. Only six per cent reported ever receiving such a prescription from their physician. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents said they would be open to spending time in nature if their doctor prescribed it, and nearly half (46%) would consider asking their doctor about a nature prescription.

In the UK, 73% have never heard of a social prescription, while 21% have heard about it but not been prescribed it. Only 3% had a social prescription issued by their physician. Two out of every three patients (66%) would also be open to spending time in nature if their physician prescribed it, and almost half (42%) would be open to asking their doctor about a nature prescription.

According to the global YouGov survey, seven out of ten medical professionals (67%) in the UK would recommend Sweden as a travel destination to improve health.

About Dr. Stacy Beller Stryer, US

Board-certified paediatrician doing public health work both for the federal government and associate medical director for parkrxamerica.org (PRA), aka natureprescribed.org. (Download Press Photo)

About Dr/Sir Sam Everington, UK

Vice President of the British Medical Association. Has received a knighthood for services to primary care. (Download Press Photo)

More Information on The Swedish Prescription: visitsweden.com/the-swedish-prescription

Press Imagery and video

Selected Destination images

***Survey methodology:** This survey was conducted by the YouGov analysis institute during 24 June and 3 July 2025 through online panels with +9000 18+ year-old respondents in different markets: Denmark (1003 respondents), Finland (1016), France (1023), Germany (1016), Netherlands (1025), Norway (1021), Sweden (1012), UK (1037) and USA (1005). A parallel survey was conducted in the UK with medical professionals as respondents (147).*

*Visit Sweden is a marketing company owned by the Swedish government. It is a national tourism organization to promote the destination Sweden to increase the country's attractiveness that contributes to tourism consumption, export earnings and employment. Visit Sweden works together with the Swedish tourism industry to effectively reach the most desired target groups for long-term sustainable tourism. Visit Sweden is based in Stockholm with local representation in several foreign markets. **Welcome to Sweden - a destination of a different nature.**This content may be confidential. Please address the sender and delete the mail if it turns up where it shouldn't. We act according to GDPR*

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

https://press.visitsweden.com/2025-09-23-Sweden,-the-worlds-first-travel-destination-on-prescription