

Coolcation is heating up as American travelers turn to Sweden for summer relief

A growing number of American travelers are trading extreme heat for something far more appealing: a cooler, more balanced summer. Sweden is emerging as a leading “coolcation” destination—offering long daylight hours, accessible nature, and mild seasonal temperatures.



Photo: Markus Holm/Visit Sweden ([Download](#))

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A “coolcation” refers to travel to destinations with milder summer climates, where heat is less intense and outdoor activities remain comfortable throughout the day.

Travel behavior continues to shift in this direction. Identified by Condé Nast Traveler as a key tourism trend, coolcation reflects a broader move away from overheated and crowded destinations toward places where climate and space enhance the experience.

Steady signals from the US market

Interest from the United States is gradually increasing. According to Visit Sweden data, travel-related Google searches for Sweden rose by +2% year-on-year.

Source: <https://corporate.visitsweden.com/kunskap/malgrupp/usa/amerikanska-resenarers-googlesokningar-om-sverige/>

Search trends highlight demand for nature-based experiences, seasonal phenomena, and active outdoor travel—including interest in the midnight sun, northern landscapes, lakes, and archipelagos.

A shift in when and how people travel

According to the [WTM Global Travel Report 2025](#), demand is moving away from peak summer weeks toward shoulder and off-season travel. Sweden reflects this shift: 57% of annual guest nights now occur outside the June–August period, with growth in these off-peak months outpacing the summer season in 2025 compared to 2019.

At the same time, data from TourMIS indicates that international guest nights in Nordic countries have grown more strongly during the summer months compared to parts of Southern Europe, reinforcing the shift toward cooler destinations.

Source: https://www.tourmis.info/index_e.html

Airline data points in the same direction. Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) reports a more than 10% increase in passengers traveling to Northern destinations over the past year, highlighting growing demand for cooler regions.

Source: <https://news.cision.com/sas/r/demand-for-scandinavian-destinations-rises-as-travelers-add-new-types-of-trips.c4338003>

Why Sweden stands out now

With summer temperatures typically ranging between 68–77°F (20–25°C) in southern Sweden, and cooler conditions in the north, the country offers a climate that remains moderate during peak season.

Sweden's geography further supports this positioning:

- More than 100,000 lakes
- Over 267,000 islands (the highest number globally)
- Extensive coastlines and widespread access to water
- Long daylight hours during summer months

Together, these factors enable outdoor activities without the constraints of extreme heat or high visitor density.

Regions such as **Stockholm (archipelagos, design, waterfront living)**, **Gothenburg and West Sweden (seafood, coastal access)**, **Skåne and South Sweden (open landscapes, culinary experiences)** and **Northern and Arctic Sweden (midnight sun, wilderness)** offer distinct seasonal experiences, combining urban environments with close proximity to nature.

Five distinctly Swedish ways to cool down this summer

Kayoga in West Sweden – kayak meets yoga

Guided kayaking through the archipelago combined with yoga sessions designed to support mobility and recovery.

Fell snorkeling – swimming with trout

Snorkeling in clear mountain streams in northern Sweden, with water temperatures typically around 50–59°F (10–15°C).

Icehotel 365 & Icebar Stockholm

Indoor environments maintained at 23°F (-5°C) year-round, regardless of outside temperatures.

Ski and raft in Värmland

Year-round cross-country skiing in an indoor facility, combined with traditional timber rafting experiences on the Klarälven river.

Lake swimming across Sweden

Large lakes such as Vänern and Vättern offer accessible freshwater swimming with relatively low crowd density compared to many coastal destinations.

More information

<https://visitsweden.com/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/coolcation/>

Press images

<https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/u7g50fjr7>

<https://press.visitsweden.com/2026-04-29-Coolcation-is-heating-up-as-American-travelers-turn-to-Sweden-for-summer-relief>