Visit Sweden News Room

Wisconsin Family Wins Swedish Island

Madison, Wisconsin resident Eric Holmer and his family are preparing for a trip to Sweden after Holmer was selected as one of five winners in Visit Sweden's global "Your Swedish Island" initiative, beating more than 2,200 entries from 100 countries.



Eric Holmer (left) and his family from Madison, Wisconsin. (Download)

Holmer was the only American selected as one of the campaign's five island custodians. The international initiative invited travelers from around the world to apply for the chance to experience one of five secluded Swedish islands for a year.

His island, Skötbådan, is a tiny granite outpost in the northern Stockholm Archipelago, surrounded by the open waters of the Baltic Sea near the historic island of Arholma. Stretching only a few hundred feet across, the island once served as an anchoring point for herring nets during Sweden's fishing era. Today it is defined by smooth cliffs, seabirds, and uninterrupted Nordic horizons.

Holmer, who has Swedish roots, is planning to travel to Sweden later this summer with his family to experience the country's islands and reconnect with a part of his family heritage.

"It feels truly special to receive this honor, especially because of the history behind our Swedish surname. Tusen tack!" says **Eric Holmer**.

The initiative was launched by Visit Sweden earlier this year in response to growing global interest in quieter, nature-based travel experiences and alternatives to increasingly crowded tourist destinations.

"The response from around the world shows how strongly people are craving nature, quiet, and a different pace of travel," says **Susanne Andersson**, CEO of Visit Sweden. *"With Your Swedish Island, we wanted to highlight a side of Sweden that feels increasingly valuable today — open space, simplicity, and the freedom to experience nature responsibly."*

The remaining winners came from Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

Unlike private island ownership, the initiative is based on Sweden's Right of Public Access, *Allemansrätten*, which allows everyone to responsibly enjoy nature while protecting it for others.

Developed together with the National Property Board of Sweden (SFV), the campaign was designed to showcase a different side of Swedish travel: remote yet accessible places where travelers can disconnect without disconnecting entirely from local culture and community life.

Additional resources

Your Swedish Island campaign:
https://visitsweden.com/your-swedish-island/

More about the initiative:
https://press.visitsweden.com/2026-02-17-With-most-islands-in-the-world,-Sweden-offers-five-to-travelers

Winning videos and press images of U.S. winner Eric Holmer:
https://visitsweden.qbank.se/mb/?h=fa1de3e9737536ddb5273edd8499763d&p=dccda36951e6721097a93eae5c593859&fid=1246

Your Swedish Island press imagery and video:
https://visitsweden.qbank.se/mb/?h=23421d8b052e56210909cac5f7e2cbae&p=dccda36951e6721097a93eae5c593859&fid=1112

Select Sweden destination images:
https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/1sm7pdd6cs

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About Visit Sweden:
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https://press.visitsweden.com/20260529-Wisconsin-Family-Wins-Swedish-Island