Visit Sweden News Room

Sweden invites travellers to experience more by being fully present

Some things are better done than documented.

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — 23 June 2026 — Visit Sweden is drawing attention to hands-on travel as a way for international travellers to exchange digital distractions for active, tactile engagement with Swedish nature, food, craft and culture. By prioritizing participation over passive observation, Sweden responds to growing demand for travel that supports mental recovery, deeper cultural connection and more memorable experiences.



Surströmming, fermented herring, is a Swedish tradition that engages more than just the sense of taste. Credits: Visit Sweden (Download)

In a time when travel is increasingly shaped by constant input, digital distractions and the pressure to capture every moment, Sweden offers something different: opportunities to slow down through active participation. Those who take part often return home with more than just photos: they return with new skills, stronger memories and a clearer sense of connection to the place they visited.

Why is hands-on travel relevant now?

Research suggests that travellers are increasingly looking for trips that feel restorative, immersive and genuinely engaging. According to Amadeus' *Travel Dreams 2026* report, 41% of travellers aspire to return from a trip with a calmer nervous system, while one third describe an ideal destination as one where they are inspired to digitally detox because the world around them is more interesting. American Express' 2026 Global Travel Trends Report also highlights the rise of "sight-doing", with travellers seeking hands-on local workshops and activities that help them connect more deeply with a place and its culture.

"*Travellers increasingly value experiences they can actively participate in rather than simply observe. In Sweden, many of those experiences are found in nature, local traditions and everyday life—and often become the memories that stay with people long after they return home*," says **Susanne Andersson**, CEO of Visit Sweden.

How does active participation support a more memorable trip?

When the hands are engaged, the mind often follows. Hands-on activities can help travellers focus on the task at hand, reduce mental noise and create a more grounded connection to their surroundings. In Sweden, these experiences are often closely tied to nature, traditional skills and local food culture, giving visitors practical ways to slow down, learn by doing and experience the destination through participation rather than constant capture.





Photo 1: Anna Hållams/imagebank.sweden.se (Download) Photo 2: Emmie Bolmstedt/imagebank.sweden.se (Download) Photo 3: Tina Stafrén/imagebank.sweden.se (Download)

What hands-on experiences can travellers try in Sweden?

To support travellers seeking a more engaged holiday, Visit Sweden provides a curated guide to **17 hands-on experiences** available across the country. These activities allow visitors to take part in Swedish traditions, landscapes and everyday culture in practical, memorable ways:

- Forage for berries and mushrooms in forests open to everyone through the Right of Public Access
- Build a traditional timber raft and drift down the Klarälven River
- Paddle through quiet archipelagos
- Learn traditional crafts, like Sámi handicrafts in Arctic Sweden
- Try ice sculpting at the ICEHOTEL — any time of year
- Master the art of baking Swedish cinnamon buns or make traditional polkagris candy

- Gather around a fire to cook outdoors in the Swedish wilderness

Selected bookable ideas for international travellers

Travellers can also book highly participatory holidays and activities through specialist operators and local artisan makers. Examples include a Sámi folk craft experience in Jämtland, craft workshops in the Stockholm archipelago, and kayaking among the islands of East Sweden.

Is there a film I can watch?

A light-hearted **film** explores a situation many travellers will recognise: becoming so focused on documenting an experience that the experience itself risks fading into the background.

Press materials

Press images and videos
Selected destination images

Sources

Visit Sweden: 17 hands-on things to do in Sweden
Amadeus Travel Dreams 2026
American Express Global Travel Trends Report
How Working With Your Hands Can Ease Anxiety
Benefits of Working With Your Hands

https://press.visitsweden.com/hands-on_travel