

All Aboard Sweden's Meatball Express This Christmas

From Christmas markets and Swedish meatballs to seaside saunas and Northern Lights, Sweden's winter rail journeys offer a festive way to explore the country.



Köttbullar, the train's unofficial namesakes. Photo: Snälltåget ([Download](#))

Sweden's Christmas traditions are taking to the rails. Affectionately known as the "Meatball Express," Swedish train operator Snälltåget takes travelers on a journey through historic towns, festive markets and regional traditions, with a distinctly Swedish culinary experience along the way. The train owes its playful nickname to Krogen, its onboard restaurant car, where Swedish meatballs are served with mashed potatoes, cream sauce and lingonberries.

Traveling through southern Sweden and the regions of Skåne, Småland and Östergötland on its way to Stockholm, the train connects some of the country's lesser-known destinations, where Christmas markets, local craftsmanship and seasonal food traditions offer plenty of reasons to stop along the way. Special winter services also extend the journey north toward the Arctic Circle and Sweden's ski resorts.

Malmö and Lund: Seaside Saunas and Christmas Traditions

After crossing the Öresund Bridge from Denmark, Malmö offers a first taste of Swedish winter traditions. At the historic Ribersborg Bath House, known locally as *Kallis*, visitors can alternate between a hot sauna and a dip in the chilly Öresund Strait before warming up with a Swedish fika.

On November 28–29, Mitt Möllan hosts its annual Christmas market, featuring independent artisans, Scandinavian design, local artwork and food.

Just ten minutes away by train, the university town of Lund celebrates the season with Vinterlund, a winter festival featuring seasonal lights and cultural events. Its traditional Christmas tree lighting takes place on November 27, while the Lund Saluhall food hall offers an opportunity to sample regional specialties.

More information: [Malmö](#) | [Visit Lund](#)

Småland: Glassmaking and Christmas Markets

In Småland, in South Sweden, the Kingdom of Crystal offers a different kind of holiday shopping. The village of Kosta opens its winter market on November 21, combining seasonal displays with the region's glassmaking traditions.

Other seasonal highlights include the Christmas market at Huseby Bruk and Advent celebrations at Astrid Lindgren's Näs in Vimmerby, dedicated to the childhood home of the world-famous Swedish author. Both can be reached by onward connections from stations along the main rail route.

More information: [Kingdom of Crystal](#) | [Christmas Markets in Småland](#)

Östergötland: Historic Streets and Advent Lights

Further north, the open-air museum Gamla Linköping hosts traditional Christmas markets on November 28–29 and December 5–6, with crafts and seasonal food among its preserved wooden buildings.

Nearby Norrköping offers a more unusual take on the season, with four giant illuminated candles atop the former industrial building Värme kyrkan, creating an oversized Advent candlestick.

More information: [Discover Östergötland](#)

Stockholm: Christmas Markets and Festive Feasts

The journey ends in Stockholm, where Christmas traditions range from historic markets to festive dining on the water.

At Skansen, the world's oldest open-air museum, the Christmas market has been a seasonal tradition since 1903. Open Friday through Sunday from November 27 to December 20, 2026, it features Swedish handicrafts, traditional foods and Christmas customs.

In the city center, the Christmas market in Gamla Stan (Old Town) adds another historic setting for seasonal shopping, while traditional *julbord* (Christmas buffet) cruises take visitors through the Stockholm Archipelago, serving dishes including pickled herring, cured salmon and spiced glögg.

More information: [Stockholm](#) | [Christmas Markets in Stockholm](#)

Beyond Christmas: Northern Lights and Ski Adventures

The winter rail experience doesn't end in Stockholm. On November 23, 2026, Snälltåget operates a special overnight departure from Malmö via Stockholm toward Narvik in Norway, covering 2,156 kilometers (approximately 1,340 miles) and crossing the Arctic Circle, with stops in Swedish Lapland including Kiruna, Abisko and Björkliden. The return journey departs Narvik on November 27.

For the 2026–27 winter season, Snälltåget is also introducing a weekly train and connecting bus service to Sälen, one of Sweden's major ski destinations, running on Saturdays from December 19 through April 10.

More information: [Snälltåget](#)



Snälltåget winter night train arriving at Åre ski village Train Station Photo: Snälltåget [Download](#)

Connecting to Sweden by Rail

Sweden's rail network makes it possible to combine major cities with smaller towns and regional experiences in one trip, turning the journey itself into part of the winter vacation.

From the UK, travelers can take the Eurostar from London St Pancras to Brussels or Amsterdam, then continue by train to Hamburg. From there, Snälltåget offers a direct daytime train to Stockholm via Copenhagen and Malmö, connecting Germany,

Denmark and Sweden in a single journey.

Alternative connections include Deutsche Bahn services through Denmark and overnight trains between Germany and Sweden, including Snälltåget's Berlin service and RDC EuroNight's Hamburg–Stockholm route.

Train Routes and Timetables

Snälltåget Daytime Rail Services

Hamburg to Stockholm

Route: Hamburg Central Station (Hamburg Hbf), departure 09:51 → Copenhagen Syd → Malmö → Stockholm Central Station, arrival 21:17.

[View timetable](#)

Stockholm to Hamburg

Route: Stockholm Central Station, departure 10:43 → Malmö → Copenhagen Syd → Hamburg Central Station (Hamburg Hbf), arrival 21:57.

[View timetable](#)

Snälltåget Overnight Rail Services

Berlin to Stockholm

Route: Berlin Central Station (Berlin Hbf), departure 21:09 → Hamburg → Copenhagen Syd → Malmö → Stockholm Central Station, arrival 13:17 the following day.

[View timetable and operating dates](#)

Stockholm to Berlin

Route: Stockholm Central Station, departure 16:25 → Malmö → Copenhagen Syd → Hamburg → Berlin Central Station (Berlin Hbf), arrival 08:35 the following morning.

[View timetable and operating dates](#)

Special Northern Lights Train: November 23–27, 2026

Route: Malmö Central Station, departure 13:15 on November 23 → Stockholm Central Station, departure 18:55 → Kiruna → Abisko → Narvik, arrival 16:34 on November 24.

Return journey departs Narvik on November 27.

[View special train information](#)

New Sälen Winter Ski Connection

Saturdays, December 19, 2026 – April 10, 2027.

Route: Train to Mora with a connecting bus to Sälen's ski resorts.

[View routes and booking information](#)

Schedules, operating dates and availability are subject to change. Travelers should confirm current information directly with the train operators before booking.

Further Information

- [Snälltåget](#)
 - [Eurostar](#)
 - [Deutsche Bahn](#)
 - [SJ Swedish Railways](#)
 - [RDC EuroNight](#)
 - [Christmas Markets in Sweden](#)
 - [Image Bank Sweden](#)
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