



# Sweden

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Woodstockholm (p1105)
- ➔ Camp Ripan Restaurang (p1119)
- ➔ Mrs Saigon (p1110)
- ➔ Thörnströms Kök (p1114)

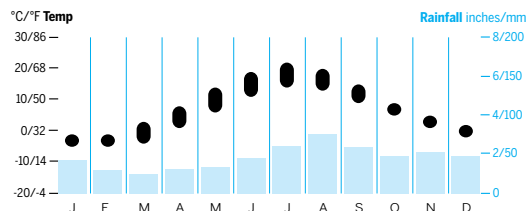
## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Rival Hotel (p1104)
- ➔ Mäster Johan Hotel (p1109)
- ➔ Icehotel (p1118)
- ➔ STF Göteborg City (p1112)

## Why Go?

As progressive and civilised as it may be, Sweden is a wild place. Its scenery ranges from barren moonscapes and impenetrable forests in the far north to sunny beaches and lush farmland further south. Its short summers and long winters mean that people cling to every last speck of summer sunshine, while in winter locals rely on candlelight and *glögg* (mulled wine) to warm their spirits. But lovers of the outdoors will thrive here in any season: winter sees skiing and dog-sledding, while the warmer months invite long hikes, swimming and sunbathing, canoeing, cycling, you name it – if it's fun and can be done outdoors, you'll find it here. For less rugged types, there's always restaurant- and nightclub-hopping and museum-perusing in cosmopolitan Stockholm, lively Göteborg and beyond.

## When to Go Stockholm



**Mar** There's still plenty of snow, but enough daylight to enjoy winter sports.

**Jun–Aug** Swedish summers are short but intense, and the White Nights beyond the Arctic Circle are magical.

**Sep** The stunning colours of the autumn season make this prime hiking time up north.

## STOCKHOLM

08 / POP 910,000

Beautiful capital cities are no rarity in Europe, but Stockholm is near the top of the list for sheer loveliness. The saffron-and-cinnamon buildings that cover its 14 islands rise starkly out of the surrounding ice-blue water, honeyed in sunlight and frostily elegant in cold weather. The city's charms are irresistible. From its movie-set Old Town (Gamla Stan) to its ever-modern fashion sense and impeccable taste in food and design, the city acts like an immersion school in aesthetics.

### Sights

Once you get over the armies of tourists wielding ice-cream cones and shopping bags, you'll discover that Gamla Stan, the oldest part of Stockholm, is also its most beautiful. The city emerged on this tiny island in the 13th century.

#### **Kungliga Slottet**

PALACE

(Royal Palace; ☎ 08-402 61 30; [www.theroyalpalace.se](http://www.theroyalpalace.se); Slottsbacken; adult/child Skr160/80; guided tour in English Skr20; ☉ 8.30am-5pm Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm May-Jun & Sep, shorter hours rest of year; 🚶 2 Slottsbacken, 📍 Gamla Stan) Kungliga Slottet was built on the ruins of Tre Kronor castle, which burned down in 1697. The north wing survived and was incorporated into the new building. Designed by court architect Nicodemus Tessin the Younger, it took 57 years to complete. Highlights include the decadent Karl XI Gallery, inspired by Versailles' Hall of Mirrors, and Queen Kristina's silver throne in the Hall of State.

#### **Vasamuseet**

MUSEUM

([www.vasamuseet.se](http://www.vasamuseet.se); Galärvarvsvägen 14; adult/child Skr130/free; ☉ 8.30am-6pm Jun-Aug, 10am-5pm Sep-May; 📍 14; 🚶 67) A good-humoured glorification of some dodgy calculations, Vasamuseet is the custom-built home of the massive warship *Vasa*; 69m long and 48.8m tall, it was the pride of the Swedish crown when it set off on its maiden voyage on 10 August 1628. Within minutes, the top-heavy vessel tipped and sank to the bottom of Saltsjön, along with many of the people on board.

Tour guides explain the extraordinary and controversial 300-year story of its death and resurrection, which saw the ship painstakingly raised in 1961 and reassembled like a giant 14,000-piece jigsaw. Almost all of what you see today is original.

On the entrance level is a model of the ship at scale 1:10 and a cinema screening a 25-minute film (in English at 9.30am and 1.30pm daily in summer) covering topics not included in the exhibitions. There are four other levels of exhibits covering artefacts salvaged from the *Vasa*, life on board, naval warfare, and 17th-century sailing and navigation, plus sculptures and temporary exhibitions. The bottom-floor exhibition is particularly fascinating, using modern forensic science to recreate the faces and life stories of several of the ill-fated passengers.

Guided tours are in English every 30 minutes in summer, less frequently the rest of the year.

#### **Historiska Museet**

MUSEUM

(☎ 08-51 95 56 20; [www.historiska.se](http://www.historiska.se); Narvavägen 13-17; ☉ 11am-6pm Jun-Sep, to 8pm Wed Sep, shorter hours rest of year; 📍 Karlslan | Östermalmstorg, 🚶 Djurgårdsbron-sillalle) **FREE** The national historical collection awaits at this enthralling museum. From Iron Age skates and a Viking boat to medieval textiles and Renaissance triptychs, it spans over 10,000 years of Swedish culture and history. There's an exhibit about the medieval Battle of Gotland (1361), an excellent multimedia display on the Vikings, a room of breathtaking altarpieces from the Middle Ages, a vast textile collection and a section on prehistoric culture.

An undisputed highlight is the subterranean Gold Room, a dimly lit chamber gleaming with Viking plunder and other treasures, including the jewel-encrusted Reliquary of St Elisabeth (who died at 24 and was canonised in 1235). The most astonishing artefact, however, is the 5th-century seven-ringed gold collar discovered in Västergötland in the 19th century. Weighing 823g, it is decorated with 458 symbolic figures.

#### **Moderna Museet**

MUSEUM

(☎ 08-52 02 35 00; [www.modernamuseet.se](http://www.modernamuseet.se); Exercisplan 4; ☉ 10am-8pm Tue & Fri, to 6pm Wed-Thu, to 5pm Sat & Sun; 📍 65; 🚶 Djurgårdsfärjan) **FREE** Moderna Museet is Stockholm's modern-art maverick, its permanent collection ranging from paintings and sculptures to photography, video art and installations. Highlights include works by Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst and Robert Rauschenberg. There are important pieces by Francis Bacon, Marcel Duchamp and Matisse, as well as their Scandinavian contemporaries, plus work by lesser-known contemporary artists.