



# Scandinavia

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Noma (p947)
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## Best Places to Stay

- » Icehotel (p964)
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- » Det Hantseatiske Hotel (p969)

## Why Go?

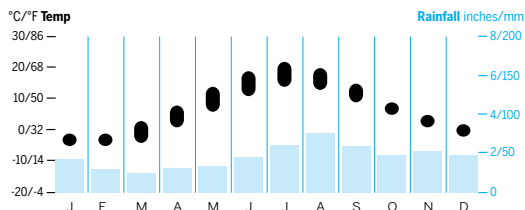
Effortlessly chic cities balance remote forests. Rocking festivals, majestic aurora borealis. Scandinavia, spanning Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland, is anything but bland.

Stolid Nordic stereotypes dissolve in the region's vibrant capitals. Crest-of-the-wave design can be seen across them all, backed up by outstanding modern architecture, excellent museums, acclaimed restaurants and a sizzling nightlife.

The great outdoors is rarely greater than in Europe's big north. Epic expanses of wilderness and intoxicatingly pure air mean that engaging with nature is utter pleasure. It's rare to find such inspiring landscapes that are so easily accessed.

Despite the scary subzero winter temperatures, there's a wealth of things to do: skiing, sledding behind huskies or reindeer, taking snowmobile safaris, spending romantic nights in snow hotels, visiting Santa Claus and gazing at the northern lights. Summer's long days are filled with festivals, beer terraces and wonderful boating, hiking and cycling.

## When to Go Stockholm



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

**Jun–Aug** Scandinavian summers are short but intense, and the White Nights magical.

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

## AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** krone (Denmark), euro (€), (Finland), krone (Norway), krona (Sweden)
- » **Language** Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish, Sámi languages
- » **Money** ATMs very common, plastic taken everywhere
- » **Visas** Schengen visa rules apply

## Fast Facts

- » **Area** 1,216,393 sq km
- » **Capitals** Copenhagen (Denmark), Helsinki (Finland), Oslo (Norway), Stockholm (Sweden)
- » **Country code** 45 (Denmark), 358 (Finland), 47 (Norway), 46 (Sweden)
- » **Emergency** 112

## Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €70–110
- » **Two-course meal** €30–50
- » **Museum entrance** €7–12
- » **Beer** €6–10
- » **City transport ticket** €3–10

## Resources

- » **Visit Denmark** ([www.visitdenmark.com](http://www.visitdenmark.com))
- » **Visit Finland** ([www.visitfinland.com](http://www.visitfinland.com))
- » **Visit Norway** ([www.visitnorway.com](http://www.visitnorway.com))
- » **Visit Sweden** ([www.visitsweden.com](http://www.visitsweden.com))

## Connections

Fast, cheap ferries link the Scandinavian nations with each other and with Germany, Russia, Baltic Europe and the UK. Denmark is connected to Germany by road and rail, and the bridge across to Sweden means the rest of Scandinavia is too. Finland is linked by road and rail to Russia. Flights to the four capital cities connect Scandinavia with the rest of Europe and the wider world.

## ITINERARIES

### One Week

Start in Copenhagen, admiring the waterfront, museums, restaurants and lights of Tivoli at night. Take a day trip to the cathedral and Viking Ship Museum at Roskilde or 'Hamlet's' castle at Helsingør. Next, train it to Stockholm and get into the design scene and the stately, watery town centre. An overnight train takes you to Oslo, to check out Munch's work. From Oslo, a long but scenic day takes you to Bergen, Norway's prettiest city. From here, head by ferry to Denmark. Nose on down to Aarhus – don't miss the ARoS art museum. From here, it's an easy train back to Copenhagen.

### Two Weeks

Roughly follow the one-week itinerary, but with a side trip from Stockholm on a Baltic ferry to Helsinki. From here you could explore classic Finnish lakeland at Savonlinna, or the old capital of Turku. Other stops could include Göteborg in Sweden; more fjord-y Norwegian experiences at Geiranger; or extra Danish time at Odense.

## Essential Food & Drink

- » **Coffee** To fit in, eight or nine cups a day is about right; luckily, the region's cafes are a delight.
- » **Offbeat meats** Unusual meats appear on menus: delicious reindeer meat is a staple up north, elk (moose) is commonly eaten, and, more controversially, bear and whale are also regionally available.
- » **Rye bread** Dark and crusty or light and chewy, this strong flatbread is an acquired taste but is the staple for sandwiches and snacks in cafes, homes and market halls across the region.
- » **Alcoholic drinks** Beer is a staple. Swedish brännvin shots, caraway-spiced Danish akvavit or salt-liquorice Finnish salmiakkikossu are stronger tipplers that should be tried.
- » **Fish** Salmon is ubiquitous and delicious, while smoked, cured, pickled or fried herring is fundamental. Tasty lake fish include Arctic char and pike-perch.