



≡ *Fast Talk*

Swedish

Guaranteed to get you talking

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Before You Go

Swedish belongs to the Nordic branch of the Germanic languages. It's spoken by the Swedes, who number close to ten million, and by the Finnish-Swedish minority in southern Finland, including the island of Åland. The language is very closely related to Danish and Norwegian. In fact, Scandinavians can usually make themselves understood in their sister countries.


PRONUNCIATION TIPS

There's a great variety of dialects in Sweden. The pronunciation guide in this book reflects a neutral Swedish, **rikssvenska**, but don't be surprised if you're given a slightly different pronunciation from a Swede. It all depends on where they come from!

★ It's important to get the stress right in words. Swedish can have a single or a double accent on a word, giving it its sing-song quality, and sometimes the difference of meaning between two identical-looking words can be huge depending on

which accent is used. A good example is **glass** 'glahss' and **glas** 'glaas' where the former is 'ice cream' and the latter is 'glass'. In this guide we have used italic letters to denote stressed syllables.

★ Most Swedish sounds are similar to their English counterparts. One exception is **fh** (a breathy sound pronounced with rounded lips, like saying 'f' and 'w' at the same time), but with a little practice, you'll soon get it right. Note also that **ai** is pronounced as in 'aisle', **aw** as in 'saw', **air** as in 'hair', **eu** as the 'u' in 'nurse', **ew** as the 'ee' in 'see' with rounded lips, and **ey** as the 'e' in 'bet'



but longer. Just read our coloured pronunciation guides as if they were English and you'll be understood. The stressed syllables are indicated with italics.

GRAMMAR

You will notice that there are three extra letters in Swedish: **ä**, **å** and **ö**. These are the last three letters of the alphabet, so if you want to look up Åkesson in the telephone directory, you have to look near the end.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

Since English and Swedish have common roots in ancient Germanic, there are many similarities between the languages. Many words were also borrowed from Old Norse into the English language during the Viking period, which ended about a thousand years ago, making the language connection even stronger. In modern times the borrowing is going in the opposite direction, with Swedish borrowing mainly from American English.

Fast Talk Swedish

Don't worry if you've never learnt Swedish (*svenska svehn-skuh*) before – it's all about confidence. You don't need to memorise endless grammatical details or long lists of vocabulary – you just need to start speaking. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort. And remember that body language and a sense of humour have a role to play in every culture.

“you just need to start speaking”

Even if you use the very basics, such as greetings and civilities, your travel experience will be the better for it. Once you start, you'll be amazed how many prompts you'll get to help you build on those first words. You'll hear people speaking, pick up sounds and expressions from the locals, catch a word or two that you know from TV already, see something on a billboard – all these things help to build your understanding.



Phrases to Learn Before You Go

1. Can I access the Internet from here? Kan jag koppla upp mig på Internet härifrån?

kuhn yuh kop-luh up may por in-tehrr-neht haer-i-frorn

Wireless internet access at coffee shops is nearly universal and usually free.

2. What's the local speciality? Vad är den lokala specialiteten?

vaad air deyn loh-kaa-la spe-si-a-li-tey-ten

Scandinavian cuisine, once viewed as meatballs, herring and little else, is now at the forefront of modern gastronomy.

3. I'm looking for a public toilet. Jag letar efter en offentlig toalett.

yuh lea-tuhrr ehf-tehrr ehn oo-fehnt-li too-uh-leht

Public toilets in parks, shopping malls, libraries, and bus or train stations are rarely free in Sweden.

4. What would you recommend? Vad skulle ni rekommendera?

vaad sku-le nee re-ko-men-dey-ra

Let a local recommend a delicious, fresh blast of local flavour.

5. How do you say...? Hur säger man ...?

hürr say-ehrr muhn ...

Most Swedes speak English, but attempts to speak the local language will be much appreciated.

10. Phrases to Sound Like a Local

Cool!

Cool!

kool

No worries.

Inga problem.

eng-aa proo-blem

Sure.

Javisst.

yuh-vist

No way!

Det menar du inte?

deh mea-narr du in-teh

Just joking!

Jag skojar bara!

yuh sko-yar ba-rah

Too bad.

Vad synd.

vuh sünd

What a shame.

Vad tråkigt.

vuh trro-kigt

What's up?

Läget?

lae-geht

Well done!

Bra jobbat.

brrah jo-bat

Not bad.

Inte illa.

en-teh e-lah

10.

Phrases
to Start a Sentence**When's (your birthday)?**När fyller du år?
*naer fül-ler du or-rr***Where is (the bus stop)?**Var är (busshållplatsen)?
*vahrr air (bus-hol-pluht-sehn)***Where can I (rent a car)?**Var kan jag (hyra en bil)?
*vahrr kuhn yuh (hü-rruh ehn beel)***Do you have (a map)?**Har ni (en karta)?
*hahrr ni (ehn kah-rtuh)***Is there (a lift)?**Finns det (hiss)?
*fins deh (his)***I'd like (the bill).**Jag skulle vilja (ha notan).
*yaa sku-le vil-ya (haa nooh-tan)***I'd like to (book a seat).**Jag skulle vilja (boka en plats).
*yuh skul-leh vil-yuh (boo-kuh ehn pluhts)***Can I (look at it)?**Får jag (se den)?
*fawr yaa (se deyn)***Do I have to (book)?**Måste man (boka)?
*mos-teh muhn (boo-kuh)***Can you (show me)?**Kan du (visa mig)?
kuhn du (vee-suh may)

Chatting & Basics

≡ Fast Phrases

Hello.

Hej.
hay

Goodbye

Adjö!/Hej då!
uh-yer/hay dor

Thank you.

Tack.
tuhk

Essentials

Yes./No.

Ja./Nej.
yah/nay

Excuse me.

Ursäkta mig.
ü-shehk-tuh may

May I?

Får jag?
for yuh?

Do you mind?

Gör det något?
yer-rr deh nor-got

Sorry.

Förlåt.
fer-lort

Please.

Tack.
tuhk

Many thanks.

Tack så mycket.
tuhk sor mü-keh