



SWEDEN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------|----|------------------------|
| Section | 1 | Contact Addresses |
| | 2 | General |
| | 3 | Passport |
| | 4 | Money |
| | 5 | Duty Free |
| | 6 | Public Holidays |
| | 7 | Health |
| | 8 | Accommodation |
| | 9 | Resorts & Excursions |
| | 10 | Sport & Activities |
| | 11 | Social Profile |
| | 12 | Business Profile |
| | 13 | Climate |
| | 14 | History and Government |
| | 15 | Overview |

1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Northeast Europe, Scandinavia.

Swedish Travel & Tourism Council
PO Box 3030, 103 61 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: (8) 725 5500. Fax: (8) 725 5531. E-mail: info@swetourism.se
Web site: <http://www.swetourism.se> (travel trade) or <http://www.visit-sweden.com> (public)

Svenska Turistföreningen (Swedish Tourist Federation)
Street address: Stureplan 4C, 101 20 Stockholm, Sweden
Postal address: PO Box 25, 01 20 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: (8) 463 2100. Fax: (8) 678 1958. E-mail: info@stfturist.se

Embassy of Sweden
11 Montagu Place, London W1H 2AL
Tel: (020) 7917 6400. Fax: (020) 7724 4174.
Consular Section: Tel: (020) 7917 6413 or 7917 6418. Fax: 7917 6475. E-mail: embassy@swednet.org.uk
Web site: <http://www.swedish-embassy.org.uk/embassy/>
Opening hours: 0900-1230 Monday to Friday; 1330-1700 (telephone enquiries only).

Swedish Travel & Tourism Council
11 Montagu Place, London W1H 2AL
Tel: (020) 7870 5600 or (01476) 578 811 (24-hour brochure request line). Fax: (020) 7724 5872. E-mail: info@swetourism.org.uk
Web site: <http://www.visit-sweden.com>

British Embassy
Street address: Skarpögatan 6-8, 115 93 Stockholm, Sweden
Postal address: PO Box 27819, 115 93 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: (8) 671 3000. Fax: (8) 662 9989 or 671 9077 (commercial section) or 661 9766 (visa section).
Web site: <http://www.britishembassy.com>
Consulate General in: Gothenburg (Göteborg). Consulates in: Malmö and Sundsvall.

Embassy of Sweden
1501 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005
Tel: (202) 467 2600. Fax: (202) 467 2699.
E-mail: ambassaden.washington@foreign.ministry.se
Web site: <http://www.swedenemb.org>
Consulates General in: Chicago, Los Angeles (tel: (310) 445 4008), Minneapolis, New York (tel: (212) 583 2550) and San Francisco.

Danish & Swedish Tourist Boards
PO Box 4649, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-4649
Tel: (212) 885 9700. Fax: (212) 885 9710. E-mail: info@gosweden.org
Web site: <http://www.gosweden.org>

Embassy of the United States of America

Dag Hammarskjöldsväg 31, 115 89 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: (8) 783 5300. Fax: (8) 665 3303 (general office) or 660 5879 (consular section) or 660 9181 (commercial service).
Web site: <http://www.usemb.se>

Embassy of Sweden
377 Dalhousie Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N8
Tel: (613) 241 8553. Fax: (613) 241 2277.
E-mail: sweden@cybirus.se
Web site: <http://www.sweden-suede-can.org>
Honorary Consulates in: Calgary, Edmonton, Fredericton, Halifax, Montréal, Québec City, Regina, St John's, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

Canadian Embassy
Tegelbacken 4, PO Box 16129, 103 23 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: (8) 453 3000. Fax: (8) 242 491. Web site: <http://www.canadaemb.se>

Country dialling code: 46.

2 GENERAL

Area: 449,964 sq km (173,732 sq miles).

Population: 8,861,426 (1999).

Population Density: 19.7 per sq km.

Capital: Stockholm. Population: 736,113 (1998).

Geography: Sweden is bordered by Norway to the west and Finland to the northeast, with a long Baltic coast to the east and south. Approximately half the country is forested and most of the many thousands of lakes are situated in the southern central area. The largest lake is Vänern, with an area of 5540 sq km (2140 sq miles). Swedish Lapland to the north is mountainous and extends into the Arctic Circle.

Government: Constitutional monarchy. Gained independence from Denmark in 1523. Head of State: King Carl XVI since 1973. Head of Government: Prime Minister Göran Persson since 1996.

Language: Swedish. Lapp is spoken by the Sámi population in the north. English is taught as the first foreign language from the age of nine.

Religion: Church of Sweden (Evangelical Lutheran), separated from the state in January 2000; other Protestant minorities.

Time: GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to Saturday before last Sunday in October).

Electricity: 230 volts, 3-phase AC, 50Hz. 2-pin continental plugs are used.

Telephone: Full IDD is available. Country code: 46. Outgoing international code: 00. Unlike in other European countries, telephones are not found in post offices but in special 'Telegraph Offices'. There are three types of payphone: they take cash, phonocards or credit cards. Credit

card phones (indicated by a 'CCC' sign) are widely available. Phonecards can be bought from newsagents' shops or kiosks.

Mobile telephone: GSM 900/1800 networks are available. Main network providers include: Telia AB (web site: <http://www.teliamobile.se>), Europolitan AB (web site: <http://www.europolitan.se>), and Comviq (web site: <http://www.comviq.se>). Coverage is available across most of the country.

Fax: Widely available throughout the country.

Internet/E-mail: Main ISPs include Svenska Internet Centralen (web site: <http://www.sic.se>), Dataphone, (web site: <http://www.dataphone.net>), and Net Guide Scandinavia, (web site: <http://www.netg.se>). Internet cafés exist in all main urban areas.

Post: Post offices are open during normal shopping hours (0900-1800 Monday to Friday; 1000-1300 Saturday). Some branches may be closed Saturday during July. Post boxes are yellow. Stamps and aerograms are on sale at post offices and also at most bookstalls and stationers. Airmail within Europe takes three to four days. Poste Restante facilities are widely available in post offices.

Press: The provinces have their own newspapers which are widely read in their respective regions; the major dailies are confined largely to the capital. Many papers are financed by political parties but independence and freedom of the press is firmly maintained. All papers are in Swedish.

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC: MHz17.6415.579.4106.195

Voice of America: MHz15.2111.979.771.20

3 PASSPORT

| | <i>Passport Required?</i> | <i>Visa Required?</i> | <i>Return Ticket Required?</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| British | Yes | No | No |
| Australian | Yes | No | No |
| Canadian | Yes | No | No |
| USA | Yes | No | No |
| OtherEU | 1/2 | No | No |
| Japanese | Yes | No | No |

PASSPORTS: Valid passport required by all except the following:

- (a) 1. nationals of EU countries, provided holding a valid national ID card (for a stay of up to 3 months);
- (b) 2. nationals of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway holding travel documents issued for travel between these countries;
- (c) nationals of Liechtenstein and Switzerland provided holding valid national ID cards (for a stay of up to 3 months).

VISAS: Required by all except the following:

(a) nationals of the countries referred to in the chart above for a stay of up to 3 months;
(b) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Jamaica, Kiribati, Korea (Rep. of), Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, San Marino, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Swaziland, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, Tuvalu, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe for a stay of up to 3 months.

Note: A transit visa is always required by nationals of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Congo (Dem. Rep.), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

Validity: 1-90 days.

Types of visa and cost: Ordinary (Tourist/Private/Business): £18. Transit £10. Immediate family members of EU nationals receive visas free of charge.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see address section.

Application requirements: (a) Valid passport. (b) 2 passport-size photographs. (c) Fee (postal order only if sent by post). (d) Completed, signed application form. (e) Letter from employer/school. (f) Invitation letter from Swedish company/friend for business visas or private-visit visas. (g) Stamped, registered, self-addressed envelope for return of passport.

Working days required: 2-8 weeks.

Temporary residence: Enquire at Embassy.

4 MONEY

Currency: Swedish Krona (SKr) = 100 öre. Notes are in denominations of SKr10,000, 1000, 500, 100, 50 and 20. Coins are in denominations of SKr10, 5 and 1, and 50 öre.

Currency exchange: Personal cheques can be cashed in Swedish banks under the Eurocheque system.

Credit cards: Diners Club, American Express, Visa and MasterCard are all widely accepted. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other facilities which may be available.

Travellers cheques: Widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling.

Exchange rate indicators

The following figures are included as a guide to the movements of the Swedish Krona against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date May '00 Aug '00 Nov '00 Feb '01 £1.00=13.60 13.76 14.34 14.39 \$1.00=9.169.169.909.86

Currency restrictions: There are no restrictions on the import or export of local or foreign currency.

Banking hours: 0930-1500 Monday to Wednesday and Friday; 0930-1730 Thursday.

5 DUTY FREE

The following items may be imported into Sweden without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; 1 litre spirits over 22% or 2 litres wine*; A reasonable quantity of perfume; gifts up to a value of SKr1000.

Note*: Travellers must be over 20 years of age to import any alcoholic beverages. These regulations are strictly enforced.

Prohibited items: Narcotics, firearms, ammunition, weapons, most meat and dairy products, eggs, plants, endangered species and alcoholic beverages of over 60% alcohol (120° proof).

Abolition of duty-free goods within the EU: On June 30 1999, the sale of duty-free alcohol and tobacco at airports and at sea was abolished in all 15 EU member states. Although there is now no legal limit on the quantities of these goods travellers may import into most EU countries (provided they are for personal use only), Denmark, Finland and Sweden will still be imposing limits until 2004.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 13 Good Friday. Apr 16 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 24 Ascension Day. Jun 4 Whit Monday. Jun 23 Midsummer Holiday. Nov 3 All Saints' Day. Dec 24 Christmas Eve (half day). Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Boxing Day. Dec 31 New Year's Eve (half day). Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Mar 29 Good Friday. Apr 1 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 9 Ascension Day. May 20 Whit Monday. Jun 22 Midsummer Holiday. Nov 2 All Saints' Day. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Boxing Day. Dec 31 New Year's Eve (half day).

Note: Shops and offices will often close half a day early on the day before an official holiday.

7 HEALTH

| | <i>Special Precautions</i> | <i>Certificate Required</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Yellow Fever | No | No |
| Cholera | No | No |
| Typhoid and Polio | No | - |
| Malaria | No | - |
| Food and Drink | No | - |

Health care: Health care standards in Sweden are good. Hospital services are provided at county and regional levels; the latter have a greater range of specialist fields. There are full reciprocal health agreements with other EU countries including the UK. UK nationals should take an E111 form (obtainable from post offices) with them to Sweden in order to take advantage of the agreement. They are then entitled to the same medical services as Swedish citizens. This includes free hospital in-patient treatment (including medicines); children are also allowed free dental treatment. Out-patient treatment at hospitals, all treatment at clinics and general surgeries, most prescribed medicines and ambulance travel must be paid for. To obtain treatment, visit the nearest hospital clinic (Akutmottagning or Vårdcentral) taking your passport and E111 form with you. Travelling expenses to and from hospital may be partially refunded. If you are taking prescribed medicines make sure you have an adequate supply before leaving for Sweden. Dental surgeries or clinics are indicated by Tandläkare or Folktandvården signs and emergency service is available in major cities out of hours. Health insurance is recommended to cover emergency evacuation.

Travel - International

Note: The cities of Malmö (Sweden) and Copenhagen (Denmark) will be linked following the opening, on July 1 2000, of the 15.3-km (9.6-mile) Øresund Fixed Link. The link comprises a suspension bridge (7.8km/4.9 miles) and an underwater tunnel (3.5km/2.2 miles), joined in the middle by an artificial island. It is designed to provide better connections between the Scandinavian peninsula and the European continent and is likely to have a big impact on tourism.

AIR: The national airline is SAS Scandinavian Airlines System (SK). Other airlines serving Sweden include Air Canada, Air France, Aeroflot, British Airways, Finnair, Lufthansa, Ryanair and Swissair.

Approximate flight times: From London to Stockholm is approximately 2 hours 30 minutes and to Gothenburg is 1 hour 45 minutes; from Los Angeles to Stockholm is 14 hours 10 minutes; from New York to Stockholm is 7 hours 45 minutes.

International airports: Stockholm (STO) (Arlanda) is 42km (26 miles) north of the city. There are frequent bus services between the airport and the city (travel time - 40 minutes). Arlanda Express trains leave for the city every 15 minutes (travel time - 20 minutes). Taxi services are also available. Airport facilities include outgoing duty-free shop, car hire (Budget, Hertz), banks/bureaux de change, cash dispenser, restaurant/bar, coffee shop and tourist information. Gothenburg (GOT) (Landvetter) is 25km (15 miles) east of the city (travel time - 25 minutes). Coach services are frequent between the airport and the Central Station. Buses and taxis are available to the city. Airport facilities include full outgoing duty-free shop, car hire (Avis, Budget) bank/bureau de change, restaurant/bar and coffee shop. Malmö Sturup (MMX) is 31km (20 miles) southeast of the city (travel time - 35 minutes). Bus and taxi services go to the city. Airport facilities include a bureau de change and a duty-free shop. Malmö City Hovercraft (HMA), 200m (650ft) from the Central Station, is now the city's main terminal for international air passengers using the hovercraft service operated by SAS which connects with flights at Copenhagen Airport. The terminal has its own duty-free facilities. Taxi services are available.

For more information on airports, contact LfV (web site:
http://www.lfv.se/scaa/e_index.htm).

SEA: DFDS Seaways ferries sail all year round from Newcastle to Gothenburg. There are also ferry connections from Swedish ports to other destinations including Copenhagen, Gdansk, Helsingør, Kiel, Klaipeda, Oslo, Riga, St Petersburg and Tallinn.

RAIL: The UK-Sweden route is from London (Victoria and Liverpool Street) to either Hook of Holland or Ostend, and onwards via Copenhagen; travel time - 22-25 hours. There are connections by ferry from Denmark and through rail routes from Norway (Oslo, Narvik and Trondheim). See also the Note above on the Øresund Fixed Link between Sweden and Denmark.

ROAD: From the UK visitors can either drive to Sweden through Europe via Denmark or Germany, or catch a car ferry from Harwich (all year) to Gothenburg on the southwest coast (sailing time - 24 hours). See also the Note above on the Øresund Fixed Link between Sweden and Denmark.

COACH: There are services from London (Victoria), Dover and Folkstone to a number of Swedish cities throughout the year, taking approximately 30 hours, (restricted service in winter). Contact the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council for a list of operators.

Travel - Internal

AIR: SAS and Linjeflyg (LF) serve over 30 local airports. Travel by air is relatively cheap and there are a number of reduced fares offered by Linjeflyg and SAS. Contact airlines for further details.

SEA/LAKE: There are frequent coastal sailings to all ports and on the hundreds of lakes throughout the country, especially in the north. For details contact local authorities.

RAIL: The excellent and extensive rail system is run by Swedish State Railways (SJ), 105 50 Stockholm (tel: (8) 762 2000; fax: (8) 149 431). The network is more concentrated in the populated south where hourly services run between the main cities, but routes extend to the forested and sparsely populated lake area of the north, which is a scenic and popular holiday destination. Restaurant cars and sleepers are provided on many trains. Reservations are essential for most express services. Motorail car-sleeper services are operated during the summer on the long-distance routes from Malmö, Gothenburg and Västerås to Kiruna and Luleå.

Cheap fares: There are reductions for families and regular passengers, as well as a link-up with other Scandinavian countries via the Scanrail Pass, which provides unlimited travel in Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden for 21 days. It also gives free travel on the ferries between Helsingør and Helsingborg. Children aged 4-11 travel at half the fare or reduced fare. Young people aged 12-25 obtain a discount of 25%, and for passengers aged over 60 fares are discounted by 10%. All passengers may be eligible for discounted tickets, under a scheme known as raslyst, if they book at least 7 days in advance. Only a limited number of these tickets are available, so it is advisable to book as far in advance as possible.

ROAD: Traffic drives on the right. Sweden's roads are well-maintained and relatively uncrowded, but watch out for animals crossing the road in remote areas. Credit cards are becoming more acceptable as a means of payment at petrol stations. Most petrol stations have 24-hour automatic petrol pumps; they accept SKr100 and 20 notes. Bus: Express coach services and local buses are run by GDG and Swebus, and also the Swedish Post Office in the north. Cheap and efficient links are available to all towns. Many coach operators do special offers on tickets at the weekends (Friday to Sunday). Information is available in Sweden from local tourist offices. The Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö Cards offer free public transport in those areas as well as free admission to selected museums and tourist attractions. Cards can be purchased from tourist information centres, camping sites or youth hostels. Taxi: Available in all towns and at airports. Intercity taxis are also available. Car hire: Available in most towns and cities. All international agencies are represented. Regulations: Speed limits outside built-up areas are 110, 90 or 70kph (68, 56 or 43mph) depending on road width and traffic density. In built-up areas the limit is

50kph (31mph) or 30kph (19mph) in school areas. Severe fines and sometimes prison sentences are imposed on drivers over the alcohol limit (0.002%). There are on-the-spot fines for traffic offences. The use of dipped headlights is compulsory in the daytime for cars and motorcycles. Crash helmets are compulsory for motorcyclists. Children under seven may not travel in a car if it is not equipped with a special child restraint or a normal seat belt adapted for the child's use. Emergency warning triangles are obligatory. Studded tyres are only permitted from November 1 to the first Monday after the Easter holiday. Documentation: National driving licence is sufficient. The minimum age for car drivers is 18; for motorcyclists it is 17. The car's log book and written permission must be carried if driving someone else's car. A Green Card is not required by Swedish authorities, but it tops up the cover provided by a domestic policy. It is advisable to check the validity of insurance policies prior to departure.

URBAN: Public transport is efficient, comprehensive and well-integrated. Stockholm has bus, trams, metro (T-banan) and local rail services. Pre-purchase multi-tickets and passes are sold, though single tickets can also be obtained on the bus. There are trams in Gothenburg and Norrköping. Taxis are widely available; large taxi companies are cheaper than independents. Several of the main cities, particularly Stockholm, have boat excursions and services. See Resorts & Excursions section for further information.

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Stockholm to other major cities/towns in Sweden.

Air Road Rail

GOTHENBURG: 0.50 6.00 4.30

MALMÖ: 1.05 8.00 6.45

ÖSTERSUND: 0.55 8.00 6.30

KARLSTAD: 0.40 5.00 3.30

LULEÅ: 1.15 20.00 15.00

MORA: 1.00 6.00 4.30

8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS: Hotels are usually of a high standard. Most have a restaurant and/or cafeteria and a TV lounge. Good first- and medium-class hotels are found in every Swedish town. They are mostly private but are, in many cases, operated by hotel groups and offer special reduced rates for the summer and weekends. Special packages are available throughout the year in Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg. There is no formal grading structure, but most first-class hotels display the SHR sign indicating that they belong to the Swedish Hotel & Restaurant Association (SHR), Sveriges Hotell & Restaurang Företagare, PO Box 1158, Kammarkargatan 39, 111 81 Stockholm (tel: (8) 762 7400; fax: (8) 215 861; e-mail: info@shr.se; web site: <http://www.shr.se>).

Tourist hotels: Scattered all over Sweden are country hotels, characterised by good food and attractive settings. Some are renovated and modernised manor houses or centuries-old farmhouses which have frequently been in the same family for generations. They are mostly independently owned and are often located in picturesque surroundings. Others are traditional

old inns. During the summer many hotels offer facilities for swimming, fishing, boating, golf and flower-spotting or bird-watching excursions.

Mountain hotels: There are also a number of mountain hotels which are ideal for those who want a peaceful holiday. They provide a good base for expeditions in the mountains and guided walks are often arranged, as well as other activities such as keep-fit classes, fishing and canoeing. Many are also popular skiing hotels in the winter.

Hotel discount schemes: Many Swedish hotels offer discounted rates throughout the summer and at weekends during the winter and some of the leading chains have special deals which can be booked in advance, including the SARA Hotels Scandinavian Bonus Pass, the Scandic Hotel Cheque Scheme and the Sweden Hotel Pass. Details of these offers and other discount schemes are contained in the annual guide *Hotels in Sweden*, obtainable from the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council.

MOTELS: Sweden has a large number of motels, most of which are new, usually situated on the outskirts of towns or in the countryside. Parking is free. They may have swimming pools, a gymnasium and saunas, restaurants and self-service cafeterias.

FARMHOUSE ACCOMMODATION: A limited number of farms throughout Sweden offer accommodation, either in the main farmhouse or in an adjoining cottage. Accommodation is normally on a bed & breakfast basis, with self-catering facilities. Some farms offer full board. Accommodation can be booked through local tourist offices.

SELF-CATERING: Forest cabins and chalets are available throughout the country, generally set in beautiful surroundings, near lakes, in quiet forest glades or on an island in some remote archipelago. Purpose-built chalets generally consist of a living room, two or three bedrooms, a well-equipped kitchen and a toilet. They can generally accommodate up to six people, and cooking utensils, cutlery, blankets and pillows are provided. Visitors will have to supply only sheets and towels. Log cabins offer a slightly more simple type of accommodation. Renovated cottages and farm buildings are also available, usually in remote spots.

Chalet villages: Sweden's 250 chalet villages offer the advantage of amenities such as a grocery, general shops, leisure facilities, restaurants, swimming pools, saunas, launderette, playgrounds, mini-golf, tennis, badminton or volleyball. Some have programmes of special activities such as music, dancing, barbecues, riding, fishing and walking trails. It is often possible to rent boats or bicycles. Information on rental of holiday cottages or flats can be obtained from specialist agencies, local tourist offices in Sweden or the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council.

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: Family camping holidays are extremely popular in Sweden and there is a tremendous variety of attractive sites. Most are located in picturesque surroundings, often on a lakeside or by the sea with free bathing facilities close at hand. There are about 750 campsites, all officially approved and classified by the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council. Many offer facilities such as boat or bicycle rental, mini-golf, tennis, riding or saunas. Many campsites have facilities for the disabled. Most authorised sites are open with full service Jun 1-Aug 15. Many sites are also open in April or May but the full range of ancillary facilities, such as the post office, may not be open. About 200 sites remain open in the winter, particularly in the winter sports areas in central and northern Sweden. All sites open during the winter have electric sockets for caravans.

The price for one night for the whole family plus tent or caravan and use of services is one of the lowest rates in Europe, although at some sites there are small charges for the use of services like showers or launderette. A camping carnet is needed at most sites. It is issued at the first site that is visited and is then valid for the whole season. The carnet is not required by holders of the

'Camping International' card. Standards of facilities and cleanliness at Swedish campsites are probably the highest in Europe. Approved sites are inspected annually by the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council and are awarded a 1-, 2- or 3-star rating according to the facilities provided, as follows:

3-star: Supervision 24 hours a day, postal service, car wash, cafeteria, cooking facilities, play and recreational activities and assembly room.

2-star: Supervision throughout the day, illuminated and fenced-in area, drains for caravans, shaving points, kiosk, grocery shop, telephone and electric sockets for caravans.

1-star: Daily inspection, a barrier at the entrance, dustbin, drinking water, toilets, washing facilities and hot water for dishwashing, laundering and showers.

Camping Cheques, valid at more than 350 sites, can be purchased before the holiday but only as part of a package including a return car-ferry journey. Each cheque is valid for one night's stay for a family with car plus tent or caravan.

Detailed information about camping in Sweden is contained in a pamphlet which is available free of charge from the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council; an abbreviated list of campsites is also available. Motor homes and caravans can be rented.

Fuel: Camping Gaz is not normally available in Sweden and visitors are recommended to take their own supplies. Only propane gas (eg Primus) is obtainable. This is widely available at more than 2000 Primus dealers along with the necessary equipment at reasonable prices. It is important to ensure that equipment designed to burn butane is not refilled with propane; this is both illegal and highly dangerous.

CAMPING CABINS: A useful alternative to tent or caravan camping is to rent one of 4400 camping cabins which are available at 350 sites.

YOUTH HOSTELS: The 280 hostels range from mansions to a renovated sailing ship, the Af Chapman, in the centre of Stockholm, as well as many purpose-built hostels. There are no restrictions on who may use Sweden's hostels. Hostels have 2-4 beds per room, or family rooms and self-catering facilities. The hostels are run by the Swedish Tourist Federation (STF) but members of the UK Youth Hostels Association or Scottish Youth Hostels Association qualify for a cheaper rate, on production of a membership card. All youth hostels are open during the summer and some for the whole year. They are closed during the day but are open to check in new guests 0800-0930 and 1700-2200. During the summer it is advisable to book in advance. A list of Swedish youth hostels can be ordered from STF; see address section for details. The hostels are also listed in the 'International Youth Hostel Handbook', available through the YHA in the UK.

SWEDISH TOURIST FEDERATION: STF runs Sweden's youth hostels and several mountain stations in the north of the country and looks after the many mountain huts along the long-distance hiking trails. STF also publishes a list of guest harbours and issues guidance to hikers and canoeing enthusiasts.

9 RESORTS & EXCURSIONS

For the sake of clarity, information on resorts and excursions has been divided into ten main **sections:** Stockholm and the islands; Gothenburg; Skåne; The Glass Country; The West Coast; The Golden Coast; Gotland and Öland; Swedish Lakeland; The Midnight Sun Coast; and Lapland. The natural environment is protected by a law called Allemanrätten, allowing visitors to stay in

places of natural beauty provided they do not destroy the environment. For further information, contact the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council, the Swedish Tourist Federation or a local tourist information centre.

Stockholm and the islands

Tourist Office: Tourist Office: Tel: (8) 789 2400. Fax: (8) 789 2450.

Built on a string of islands, Stockholm was founded 700 years ago by King Birger Jarl at the strategic point where the fresh water of Lake Mälaren meets the salt water of the Baltic. A good starting point for an exploration of the city is the 'Old Town' (Gamla Stan), a cluster of old buildings and narrow cobbled streets which formed the original Stockholm. The old buildings are beautifully preserved and the main streets, Österlånggatan and Västerlånggatan, are pedestrian precincts with a host of boutiques, handicrafts and antique shops. The Old Town has three churches of historic interest, Storkyrkan and Riddarholm Church, both dating from the 13th century and the German Church with its magnificent Baroque interior. Overlooking the harbour is the Royal Palace, which contains the State Apartments, the Crown Jewels, the Hall of State and Chapel Royal, Royal Armoury and Palace Museum. Within easy reach of the Old Town, in a magnificent setting on the edge of Lake Mälaren, is Stockholm's elegant City Hall (Stadshuset), inaugurated about 60 years ago. There is a spectacular view of the capital from the top of the 100m (350ft) tower. Another spot for a magnificent view is the observation platform on the Kaknäs communications tower which, at 155m (508ft), is the highest building in Scandinavia. The island of Djurgården, can be reached either by bus from the city centre or by ferry across the busy harbour. The best-known attraction here is the purpose-built Vasa Museum housing the restored 360-year-old wooden warship which was recovered from the depths of Stockholm's harbour in 1961. Also in Djurgården is Skansen, an open-air folk museum which celebrated its centenary in 1991. It has about 150 traditional buildings from different regions of Sweden, as well as an open-air zoo and an aquarium. Across the road is Gröna Lund, a lively amusement park.

The city boasts over 50 museums. No fewer than eight can be visited in the Djurgården area, including the Nordic Museum (Nordiska Museet), Waldemarsudde House, which was the home of the artist Prince Eugen until 1947, and Liljevalchs Konsthall. The Historical Museum (Historiska Museet) has some priceless treasures and implements from prehistoric Sweden, as well as examples of medieval art. The National Museum is Sweden's central museum for the national collections of painting, sculpture, applied arts, printing and drawings.

Every visitor to Stockholm should invest in a special discount card, the 'Stockholm Card' (Stockholmskortet) which cuts sightseeing and entertainment costs. Cards of longer validity are available at an extra charge, available in Stockholm from the Stockholm Tourist Centre.

EXCURSIONS: There is a whole armada of boat excursions on offer. 'Under the Bridges of Stockholm' takes a circular tour through part of the harbour as well as Lake Mälaren. A longer trip can be taken out into the archipelago to resorts like Sandhamn, Saltsjöbaden or Vaxholm. Visitors can also take a boat from the City Hall to Drottningholm Palace. The Royal Theatre has been preserved in its original 18th-century form and plays are still performed there in period costume. There is also a museum depicting the development of the theatre since the Renaissance period.

Gothenburg

Tourist Office: Tourist Office: Tel: (31) 612 500. Fax: (31) 612 501.

The history of Sweden's second city Gothenburg (Göteborg) is closely tied to the sea, and it is still the arrival point for hundreds of thousands of visitors from abroad each year. The basic pattern of the city owes much to the Dutch architects who designed it; the spacious streets are laid out at right angles and there is a network of canals. The Nordstaden Kronhuset area houses

the oldest building of the city, built in 1643 and now the City Museum. Nearby is Kronhusbodarna, an arts and craft workshop centre dating from the 18th century. A visit to the Botanical Gardens (Botaniska Trädgården) is a must; the rock garden there is regarded as one of the most impressive in the world, with about 3000 species of Alpine plants. In the city centre is the beautiful Garden of Trädgårdsföreningen with its restored Palm House, built in the style of what was London's Crystal Palace. Another must during the summer is the Liseberg Amusement Park, an ideal spot for children. There are also many museums, such as the Maritime Museum (Sjöfartsmuseet) which illustrates Sweden's maritime history and the development of its shipbuilding industry. The 'Gothenburg Discount Card' can be purchased for free admission to many tourist attractions.

EXCURSIONS: One of the best ways of sightseeing in Gothenburg is on one of the famous Paddan boats. Departure is from the terminal at Kungssportsplatsen for an hour-long tour under 20 bridges and out into the busy harbour. Another popular boat trip is to the 17th-century Nya Elfsborg Fortress built on an island at the harbour mouth. There are also sightseeing tours of varying duration by bus with an English-speaking guide. A cheap way of travelling around the city is to buy a 24-hour ticket on the tram network. Gothenburg and Stockholm are both starting points for the classic 4-day trip through Sweden's great lakes and the historic Göta Canal.

RESORTS: RESORTS: See The Golden Coast section.

Skåne

Tourist Office: Tourist Office: Tel: (46) 124 350. Fax: (46) 122 372.

At the southernmost tip of Sweden is the province of Skåne, an area of fertile fields and meadows which was ruled by the Danes until 1658. To this day the Skånians have maintained their own distinctive dialect. As a reminder of the days of Danish rule there are more than 200 castles and manors scattered over the province, often forming part of a farm. This region is famous for its food, and the landscape is characterised by rolling fields and pastures and forests but only a few lakes. The best spots for swimming and fishing are along the east, south and west coasts. Inland there are countless small lanes ideal for cycling tours. For golfers, Skåne has some of the finest and most beautifully located courses in Sweden.

Especially recommended is the 'Malmö Card' which can be purchased at the Malmö Tourist Board (**tel:** (40) 300 150) and entitles visitors to free travel on local buses, free admission to museums and discounts on a wide variety of purchases.

EXCURSIONS: The medieval town of Lund has a 12th-century cathedral and 14th-century astronomical clock.

RESORTS: RESORTS: Malmö, Lund, Helsingborg, Ystad, Falsterbo, Mölle and Båstad.

The Glass Country

In the middle of the 18th century, German immigrants established the province of Småland, north of Skåne, as the home of the Swedish glass-making industry. Småland is a very large province and the 'glass country' forms only a small part of it. It is also good holiday country with vast forests, pleasant lakes and winding lanes along which red cottages are dotted. In the province of Blekinge there are large oak forests and softer landscapes. This region has many coastal towns that stretch along the Baltic. The Mörrumsån River is noted for salmon and sea trout and Lake Vättern for char fishing. Three quarters of the Swedish glassworks are found in the counties of Kronoberg and Kalmar. They are located off the beaten track surrounded by vast tracts of forest and attract many visitors each year.

EXCURSIONS: Visitors can watch the craftsmen in most of the glassworks 0800-1500 Monday to Friday. Most of the works have their own shops. Boat trips are available to the island of Visingsö on Lake Vättern. High Chaparral is a reconstructed wild west town. There is a fortress on the Baltic island of Öland (see Gotland and Öland).

RESORTS: RESORTS: Sölvesborg, Karlshamn, Ronneby, Karlskrona, Ljungby, Värnamo, Gislaved, Gnosjö, Jönköping, Växjö and Kalmar.

The West Coast

Halland: Halland is a long, narrow province strung out along the picturesque west coast. Unlike its northern neighbour, Bohuslän (see below), its landscape is gentle, with mile after mile of long sandy beaches, often fringed with pinewoods. Inland, the scenery changes as it meets the tableland of Småland and the landscape is characterised by a series of ridges and valleys. There are also vast forests and heather-covered moors.

Areas of note are Kungsbacka, a northern market town and the nearby Onsala peninsula, ideal for bathing, sailing and fishing, and Fjärås Bräcka, an unusual gravel ridge formed during the Ice Age. Further south is Varberg, one of Halland's main coastal resorts, dominated by the 13th-century Varberg Fortress. Other resorts are the port of Falkenberg and Tylösand, with its long sandy beach sheltered by dunes and pine trees. Halland's capital is the important seaport and industrial town of Halmstad. Warmed by the waters of the Gulf Stream, the west coast is a natural choice for seaside holidays. The long narrow province of Bohuslän has countless spots where visitors can enjoy an idyllic holiday in the sun. The coastline is deeply indented and there are hundreds of rocky islands. All along the coast are picturesque villages with their typical red-painted huts where the nets are hung out to dry. The province is also one of the most important centres of ancient Swedish civilisation and there are many archaeological relics dating back to the Bronze Age and Viking times.

The Golden Coast

This area is situated in the southwest of Sweden and has vast stretches of beaches, warm sea and holiday resorts reaching for 400km (250 miles) from Laholm in the south to Strömstad in the north. Here there are flat, sandy beaches, bare rocks and fjord-like inlets with meadows stretching down to the seashore and tiny fishing villages.

RESORTS: RESORTS: Gothenburg (see separate section), Halmstad, Lysekil, Tylösand, Falkenberg, Varberg, Bovallstrand, Hunnebostrand, Kungshamn, Smögen and the islands of Orust and Tjörn.

Gotland and Öland

These are Sweden's largest islands, situated off the southeast coast in the Baltic Sea. There is more sunshine here than elsewhere, making it a favourite summer holiday spot with the Swedes and, as a result, the beaches are rather crowded. The islands are of particular interest to ornithologists and botanists and there is a wealth of historic sites. Several ferries serve both islands and daily coach trips are available to Öland over Europe's longest bridge, starting just outside Kalmar on the mainland. Cycles can be hired on the islands.

EXCURSIONS: There are Stone, Bronze and Iron Age sites on both islands. On Gotland are the Lummelunda Caves with their spectacular stalactites and stalagmites and a preserved medieval town at Kattlundsgård. On Öland are the royal summer residence at Solliden; Borgholm Castle; a restored medieval church at Gärdslösa, a recently excavated fortified village at Eketorp; and many Viking stones and the local windmills.

RESORTS: RESORTS: Visby and Borgholm.

Swedish Lakeland

This region comprises the nine provinces of Västergötland, Dalsland and Värmland in the west, Närke, Västmanland and Dalarna in the north, and Östergötland, Södermanland and Uppland to the east. These form a large part of Sweden with a mixture of open water, vast lakes, plains and meadows - an area of wild natural scenery. The provinces in the west are dominated by Vänern, Sweden's largest lake, while in the north and east are the lakes of Vättern, Mälaren, Hjälmaren and Siljan as well as the Baltic Sea. The whole region is considered the cradle of Swedish culture, and it is here that the majority of Swedes live. For visitors there is a wide variety of hotels, campsites and country inns.

EXCURSIONS: Västergötland: EXCURSIONS: Västergötland has the castle of Läckö, the Trollhättan hydro-electric waterfalls, canoe trips and fishing. Närke contains the Stjerhov Manor and a 17th-century inn at Grythyttan in Västmanland. In Dalarna visitors can meet Father Christmas at the Santaworld theme park. On the island of Sollerön there are Viking graves and in Kolmården there is a zoo and safari park. Gripsholm Castle is in Södermanland, with the university city of Uppsala and the Baroque Castle of Skokloster, with a vintage car museum in Uppland.

RESORTS: RESORTS: Skara, Karlstad, Lidköping, Örebro, Askersund, Grythyttan, Rättvik, Leksand, Vadstena, Linköping, Tällberg, Sunne, Mariefred, Uppsala, Sigtuna and Björköen.

The Midnight Sun Coast

The Midnight Sun Coast is a 1500km (900-mile) stretch of Baltic coastline which runs all the way to the Finnish border. In the south are the spruce forests of the province of Gästrikland; immediately to the north of this region is Hälsingland with its spectacular views, extensive lakes and typical wood-built mansions. Forestry has traditionally been the dominant industry of Medelpad, today one of Sweden's most industrialised areas, although there are plenty of opportunities for visitors who want to fish in unspoilt outback country or rent a cottage in the middle of a countryside rich in prehistoric monuments and relics of ancient cultures. In the province of Ångermanland is some of Sweden's most breathtaking scenery, consisting of forests, lakes, islands, fjords and mountains plunging dramatically to the sea. This magnificent district is called the High Coast. Västerbotten offers unspoilt wilderness and the Norrland Riviera coastline is ideal for a relaxed holiday. There are also countless clear lakes and rivers teeming with fish, and excellent roads lead inland to the southern part of Lapland. Further north along the coast at Lövånger there are hundreds of renovated timber cottages which are rented out to holidaymakers. Nearer the Arctic Circle the air and water temperatures in the summer are much the same as in the Mediterranean and this area has an excellent sunshine record. Norrbotten is a fisherman's paradise with plenty of mountain streams and sea fishing.

RESORTS: RESORTS: Furuvik, Gävle, Söderhamn, Hudiksvall, Bollnäs, Ljusdal, Arbrå, Järvsö, Sundsvall, Härnösand, Örnsköldsvik, Ramsele, Umeå, Piteå, Luleå and Boden.

Lapland

The enormous expanse of Lapland, one of Europe's last wildernesses, covers a quarter of the **area of Sweden but has only 5% of the population. It is both inviting and inhospitable:** fell-walkers who leave the marked routes do so at their own risk. The best-known route is Kungsleden, which also gives experienced mountaineers the chance to climb Sweden's

highest peak, Kebnekaise. Other favourite areas for walking are the national parks of Sarek and Padjelanta. In the west the mountains soar up towards the Norwegian border and the region experiences rapid changes in the weather.

Jämtland: Jämtland, bordering southern Lapland, has plenty of good hiking and fast-flowing rivers for fishermen. It is known for its skiing. Wildlife is abundant in Härjedalen, with reindeer, buzzard, beaver, lynx and Sweden's only herd of musk ox.

EXCURSIONS: Lapps celebrate their annual church festivals in Gällivare. In Jokkmokk there are collections of Lapp art and culture, and a Lapp Staden, an old village of 70 cone-shaped Lapp huts. Arjeplog has an interesting Lapp museum. Iron Age burial grounds and a medieval church are on the island of Frösö. The cable-car trip from Åre leads up to the summit of Åreskutan.

RESORTS: RESORTS: Kiruna, Gällivare, Jokkmokk, Arvidsjaur, Ammarnäs, Tärnaby, Åre, Storlien, Storuman, Sylarna, Blåhammaren and Östersund. Ski resorts include Åre and Storlien.

10 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Watersports: Watersports: Sweden has hundreds of miles of beaches, particularly on the west coast, and 96,000 lakes. There are numerous water-skiing and windsurfing centres on the coast and more accessible lakes. Skindiving is mostly confined to the rocky coasts and islets on the west coast both north and south of Gothenburg. Courses are held from June to August.

Boating: Boating: There are about 50 centres where canoes are for hire. Many campsites offer a hire service. Sailing boats and motor-cruisers can be hired in more than 25 places in Sweden or visitors can bring their own. Many of Sweden's canals run through beautiful countryside and are well maintained to provide an ideal boating holiday. Short sightseeing trips are available on several canals but the classic journey is by steamer along the Göta Canal. All meals and accommodation are included in the price. Many cruises, some in vintage steamers, are operated from Stockholm out into the archipelago with its 30,000 islands.

Fishing: Fishing: Sweden has more than 96,000 lakes and visitors can enjoy fishing in most of them. There are also thousands of miles of rivers, streams and brooks and a coastline of 6760km (4200 miles). The salmon season at Mörrum near Karlshamn opens at the beginning of spring. Sea-trout can be caught throughout the year, except in high summer, which is the best time for char and grayling (typical fish from the northern part of the country). Fishing is generally free all along the coastline and in the larger lakes, including Mälaren, Vättern and Vänern, but a special permit is required to fish in other lakes and rivers. Information is available from local tourist offices. Sea-fishing tours of varying lengths are arranged on the west coast and in the south. Guest harbours are available all round the coast and on lakes Mälaren, Vänern and Vättern. The Swedish Tourist Federation (STF) publishes a list of 330 with some information in English.

Hiking: Hiking routes are on well laid-out paths in almost every part of the country. Cycling is a popular holiday recreation, particularly in the south. The Swedish Cycling Promotion Institute, in cooperation with regional tourist offices, has scheduled cycling tours in almost every region.

Golf: Golf: There are excellent golf courses and facilities provided for members and visitors. Sweden has about 150 courses. One situated north of the Arctic Circle enjoys 24-hour daylight during the summer months and many midsummer championships take place at midnight. Clubs and golf carts can usually be rented.

Winter sports: Winter sports: There are excellent facilities for skiing, skating, tobogganing and dog-sledging. Most skiing takes place in the north, particularly in Jämtland, Dalarna and Härjedalen.

11 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: Swedes like straightforward meals, simply prepared from the freshest ingredients. As a seafaring country with many freshwater lakes, fish dishes are prominent on hotel or restaurant menus. The Scandinavian cold table, called smörgåsbord, is traditional. First pickled herring with boiled potatoes, then perhaps a couple more fish courses, smoked salmon or anchovies followed by cold meat, pâté, sliced beef, stuffed veal or smoked reindeer. The hot dishes come next, for instance, another herring dish, small meatballs (köttbullar) or an omelette. A fruit salad and cheese with crispbreads round off the meal. Other dishes to look out for are smoked reindeer from Lapland; gravlax, salmon that has been specially prepared and marinated; wild strawberries; and the cloudbberries that are unique to Scandinavia. Once on the open road the traveller is well catered for with picnic sites on the way, often with wooden tables and seats. Restaurants: Top-class restaurants in Sweden are usually fairly expensive, but even the smallest towns have reasonably priced self-service restaurants and grill bars. Many restaurants all over Sweden offer a special dish of the day at a reduced price which includes main course, salad, soft drink and coffee. Waiter service is common although there are many self-service snack bars. Drink: Snapps, the collective name for aquavit or brännvin, is a Swedish liqueur which is traditionally drunk chilled with smörgåsbord. It is made under a variety of brand names with flavours varying from practically tasteless to sweetly spiced. Swedish beers are lager- and pilsner-type brews and come in four strengths. The minimum age for buying alcoholic beverages is 20. Wine, spirits and beer are sold through the state-owned monopoly, Systembolaget, open during normal shopping hours. Before 1300 on Sundays alcohol cannot be bought in bars, cafés or restaurants. After midnight alcohol can only be bought in nightclubs that stay open until 0200, 0300 or 0500. In a restaurant or a nightclub, the minimum age for buying alcoholic beverages is 18. Stiff penalties are enforced for drinking and driving.

Nightlife: Stockholm has pubs, cafés, discos, restaurants, cinemas and theatres. In the more rural areas evenings tend to be tranquil. From August to June the Royal Ballet performs in Stockholm. Music and theatre productions take place in many cities during the summer at open air venues. Outside Stockholm in the 18th-century Court Theatre of the Palace of Drottningholm there are performances of 18th-century opera.

Shopping: VAT (Moms) is refundable to tourists or visitors who are resident in non-EU countries on goods bought at shops participating in the Tax-Free Shopping scheme. The refund is payable to the customer when departing from Sweden at either airports or customs offices at ports. Special purchases include glassware and crystal, stainless steel and silver, hemslöjd (cottage industry artefacts) and wood carvings. Women's and children's clothes are good buys, especially handknitted Nordic sweaters. Shopping hours: 0900-1800 Monday to Friday, 0900-1600 Saturday. In larger towns, some shops have longer opening hours and are also open Sundays. In rural areas, shops and petrol stations close by 1700/1800.

Special Events: For details, contact the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council. The following is a selection of events celebrated in Sweden in 2001:
Jan 2001 Snow Festival, Kiruna. Feb 1-3 Great Sami WinterMarket, Jokkmokk. Feb 24-25 Northern Lights Festival, Pajala. Mar 4 Vasaloppet Cross Country Ski Race, Sälen. Apr Start of Salmon Fishing Season, Mörrum River. Apr 30 Walpurgis Night (advent of spring festivities), countrywide. Jun 9 Stockholm Marathon. Jun 14-16 Hultsfred Rock Festival. Jun Midsummer

Celebration. Jul 2-8 Music on Lake Silja. Aug 5-12 Medieval Festival Week, Visby, Gotland. Aug Jazz Festival, Gothenburg. Sep 20-22 Stockholm Beer Festival. Nov Stockholm Open Tennis Tournament. Dec 10 Nobel Prize Day, Stockholm. Dec 13 St Lucia Celebration, Stockholm.

Social Conventions: Normal courtesies should be observed. It is customary for the guest to refrain from drinking until the host makes a toast. The guest should also thank the host for the meal with 'Tack för maten'. Casual dress is acceptable for everyday occasions; smarter wear for social occasions, exclusive restaurants and clubs. Evening wear (black tie) will usually be specified when required. Smoking is prohibited on public transport and in most public buildings. Tipping: Hotel prices include a service charge. Service in restaurants is included in the bill. Late at night the service charge is higher. Taxi drivers should not be tipped as this is included in the price.

12 BUSINESS PROFILE

Economy: Sweden boasts one of Europe's most advanced industrial economies and one of the highest standards of social welfare in the world. It also boasts a relatively large number of world-class multinational companies (Volvo, Ericsson). A prolonged period of peace, which included a policy of neutrality during both World Wars, has contributed much to its economic development. Over half of the country is covered by forest, supplying raw material for the wood-based industries - paper, wood pulp and finished products such as furniture - which account for 20% of Swedish material exports. Other major exports are vehicles, office and telecommunications equipment, iron and steel, wood products and chemicals. The country is rich in mineral resources, which include 15% of the world's identified uranium deposits and large deposits of iron ore, copper, lead and zinc. Lacking fossil fuel deposits, Sweden has large nuclear power and hydroelectric programmes which meet over 80% of its energy needs. For climatic reasons, most of the country's agriculture is concentrated in the south and central regions and produces dairy products, meat, cereals and vegetables. Sweden was a long-standing member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which linked most Western European economies outside the European Union, before it finally joined the EU in 1995. Since then, the economy has prospered. At 5%, Sweden's economic growth is one of the highest in the European Union, while both inflation and unemployment are at the lower end of the EU scale (4% and 1.5% respectively). Sweden's major bilateral trading partners are Germany, the UK, Norway, Denmark and the USA.

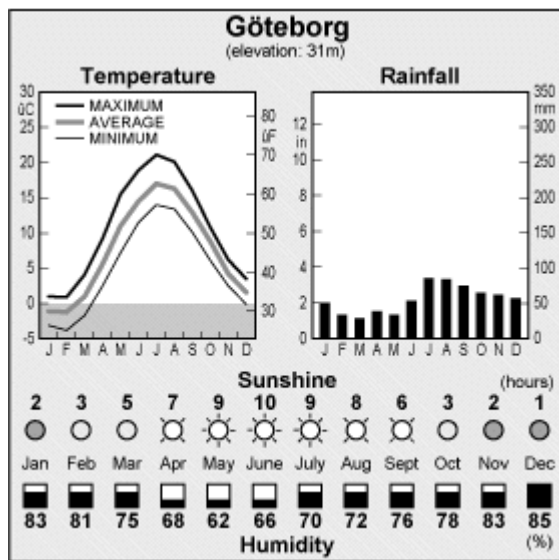
Business: Business people are expected to dress smartly. English is widely spoken in business circles. Punctuality is important for business and social occasions. Business cards are commonly used. Office hours: Flexible working hours are a widespread practice, with lunch between 1200-1300.

Commercial Information: The following organisation can offer advice: Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, Box 16050, 10321 Stockholm (tel: (8) 55 51 00 00; fax: (8) 56 63 16 00; e-mail: stock@chamber.se; web site: <http://www.chamber.se>). There are also chambers of commerce for other major towns and regions in Sweden.

Conferences/Conventions: The main venues are in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö; the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council also lists two in Lapland. The Globe Arena in Stockholm can seat up to 5000 persons and there are other venues in the city catering for up to 3000 persons. Elsewhere in Sweden most venues have facilities for 200-500 persons (although Malmö and Gothenburg have capacity for 1500). Contact the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council for more information (see address section); or Stockholm Information Service, Hamngatan 27, PO Box 7542, 103 93 Stockholm (tel: (8) 789 2400; fax: (8) 789 2450; e-mail: congress@stoinfo.se; web

site: <http://www.stockholmtown.com>); or Gothenburg Convention Bureau, Mässansgatan 8, 412 51 Gothenburg (tel: (31) 615 200; fax: (31) 811 048; e-mail: conventionbureau@gbg-co.se; web site: <http://www.gbg-co.se>); or Malmö Congress Bureau, Centralstationen, 21120 Malmö (tel: (40) 232 550; fax: (40) 235 520; e-mail: office@malmo-congress.com; web site: <http://www.malmo-congress.com>).

13 CLIMATE



In spite of its northern position, Sweden has a relatively mild climate which varies, owing to its great length. The summers can be very hot but get shorter further north. The midnight sun can be seen between mid-May and mid-June above the Arctic Circle. Winters can be bitterly cold, especially in the north.

Required clothing: Lightweight to mediumweight for summer, heavyweights for winter and rainwear all year.

14 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Sweden's contact with the rest of Europe is first recorded in the Viking period, when the country traded furs and arms along the eastern passage with Russia. During the 13th century a form of feudalism was introduced, a hereditary nobility was established and a thriving middle class of burghers emerged in the towns. Political history in this period is complex, but some sense of order, however transitory, was engendered by the accession of Margaret, then Regent of Denmark and ruler of Norway, to the throne in 1387. She made an attempt to establish a united Scandinavia (the Union of Kalmar), but this did not long survive her death, and during the 15th century the nobility were able to do much as they pleased at the expense of royal authority. The most significant event of this period was the Massacre of Stockholm in 1520, occasioned by Christian of Denmark's ill-judged attempt to reassert his authority in Sweden; this led to a national revolt, headed by Gustav Ericksson Vasa. The Danes were defeated and Gustav was crowned Gustav I in 1523, establishing the House of Vasa and heralding the beginning of Sweden's ascendancy in Europe. Protestantism became firmly established by the Convention of

Uppsala in 1593. In 1611, Gustav II Adolf (better known as Gustavus Adolphus), one of the most famous names in Swedish history, became king. Much of the foreign policy of the 17th century was dominated by the desire to turn the Baltic into a Swedish lake: this was the main motivation behind Gustav II's entry into the Thirty Years' War in 1629; despite his perceived role as a champion of Protestantism, he soon came to an alliance with Catholic France to oppose their common enemy, the Emperor Ferdinand II. Sweden won the last remaining Baltic territories not under their control, Prussia and Pomerania, but Gustav was killed at the battle of Lützen in 1632. Although the Peace of Westphalia (1648) confirmed Sweden as a major power, this dominance proved to be short-lived. Gustav was succeeded by his infant daughter Christina. She abdicated in 1654 and the reigns of her three successors (1654-1718) were dominated by military campaigns, characterised by a slow retreat (in the face of Russia and Austria) and punctuated by spectacular but indecisive victories, such as Narva (1701). An alliance against the growth of Swedish power eventually defeated Karl (in the Great Northern War) and by the mid-18th century Sweden had lost most of its possessions outside Scandinavia. Another casualty of the defeat was absolutism, established by Karl XI, but abolished on the accession of his sister Eleanora. Factions at court involved the country in further European conflicts, including another war with Russia, and in 1772 Gustav III felt strong enough to reimpose absolutist rule. Despite an aggressive and successful foreign policy his regime did not long survive his own assassination in 1792. After the Peace of Kiel in 1814, Sweden was confirmed in possession of Norway but was forced to cede several German regions to Denmark and Finland to Russia, marking the termination of Swedish interests on mainland Europe. Absolutism was not finally broken until the mid-19th century, as a result of Liberal opposition to Karl XV. The latter years of the century were dominated by economic expansion and the emergence of Norwegian nationalism, culminating in Norway's declaration of full independence in 1905. By this time a parliamentary form of government had emerged in Sweden, with a strong Socialist opposition. The Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet (SAP, Social Democrats) first gained power in the early 1920s and then, apart from a short break in 1936, held power continuously from 1932 until 1976. Since the end of the Second World War, in which Sweden remained neutral (as it has done in the First World War), the country has enjoyed growing economic prosperity with continued investment in and expansion of the welfare state. Abroad, it has forged close links with other Scandinavian countries who have developed an important role on the international stage as well-respected 'neutrals'. Nobody exemplified this more than Olaf Palme, Prime Minister and leader of the SAP from 1970 until his assassination in 1986. By the beginning of the 1990s, the economy was no longer performing as well and the centre-right coalition government of Carl Bildt which took office in 1991 instituted an austerity programme designed to reduce inflation, cut the budget deficit by reducing public expenditure, and deregulated and privatised much of Sweden's extensive public sector. Relations with the (then) European Community had become the major issue in Swedish politics, although with all the major political parties favouring membership, the issue was less than contentious. Negotiations for full membership began in 1993. These were completed by the time of the September 1994 election, which was won by the SAP, and Sweden joined the EU at the beginning of 1995. Despite a relatively enthusiastic attitude towards the EU (compared to, say, Denmark), Sweden chose not to join the European single currency at its inception in 1999, citing lack of public support and inappropriate economic conditions. The most recent general election took place in September 1998. The SAP's proportion of the vote was cut to 36% as traditional supporters, angered by the previous administration's cuts in social spending, switched to the ex-communist Left Party and the Greens: Goran Persson, the incumbent premier, was forced into an accommodation with both in order to form a government. The debate over membership of the Euro continues with Persson and the SAP broadly in favour but serious reservations expressed by the Greens and communists.

Government: Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with legislative power vested in the single-chamber 349-member Riksdag (Parliament) which is directly elected for a 3-year term. A prime minister and cabinet are drawn from the largest party or coalition of parties.

15 OVERVIEW

Country Overview: Sweden is bordered by Norway and Finland, with a long Baltic coast to the east and south. Approximately half the country is forested and most of the many thousands of lakes are situated in the southern central area. Swedish Lapland to the north is mountainous and extends into the Arctic Circle.

A good starting point for an exploration of the 700-year old capital, Stockholm, is the 'Old Town', a cluster of old buildings and narrow cobbled streets which formed the original city.

The history of Sweden's second city Gothenburg is closely tied to the sea. The spacious streets are laid out at right angles and there is a network of canals. A visit to the Botanical Gardens is a must.

The Golden Coast area is situated in the southwest of Sweden and has vast stretches of beaches, warm sea and holiday resorts reaching for 400km (250 miles) from Laholm in the south to Strömstad in the north.

Dishes to look out for are smoked reindeer from Lapland and gravlax, salmon that has been specially prepared and marinated.

Stockholm has pubs, cafés, discos, restaurants, cinemas and theatres. From August to June the Royal Ballet performs in Stockholm.

More countries : <http://www.umzugs.com>