



SWEDEN

Country profile

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AREA 449,964 km²

POPULATION



10.2 mln

GDP per capita
\$54,135



CURRENCY

Swedish krona (SEK)

Language SWEDISH

COUNTRY BACKGROUND



National Flag



Coat of arms

Location: Between Finland and Norway in Northern Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, Kattegat, and Skagerrak

Capital: Stockholm

Climate: temperate in south with cold, cloudy winters and cool, partly cloudy summers; subarctic in north

Ethnic Make-up: indigenous population- Swedes with Finnish and Sami minorities; foreign-born or first-generation immigrants: Finns, Yugoslavs, Danes, Norwegians, Greeks, Turks

Religions: Lutheran 87 %, other (includes Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist) 13 %

Language in Sweden: The official language of Sweden is Swedish and it is spoken by the majority of individuals living in Sweden. One of two key minority languages is Saami, which is spoken in the Northern regions of Sweden, and finally Finnish. There are also a number of Roman in Sweden who speak in Romani.

SWEDEN FACTS

Culture

One of the key characteristics of Swedish culture is that Swedes are egalitarian in nature, humble and find boasting absolutely unacceptable. In many ways, Swedes prefer to listen to others, as opposed to ensuring that their own voice is heard. When speaking, Swedes speak softly and calmly. It is rare to witness a Swede demonstrating anger or strong emotion in public.



Behaviour

Behaviours in Sweden are strongly balanced towards 'lagom' or, 'everything in moderation'. Excess, flashiness and boasting are abhorred in Sweden.. As an example, work hard and play hard are not common concepts in Sweden. People work hard but not too hard, they go out and enjoy themselves, but without participating in anything extreme. Due to the strong culture of egalitarianism in Sweden, competition is not encouraged and children are not raised to believe that they are any more special than any other child.



Work and leisure time – two different things

Swedes like to divide their time exclusively between work and leisure. We also like to separate colleagues and private friendships. A commonly used expression is “Never mix work and pleasure”. Don't be surprised if your colleagues don't ask you to participate in their leisure time or don't introduce you to their friends. This has nothing to do with you coming from a different country, they don't spend time outside work with their Swedish colleagues either. People rarely discuss private matters at work and they are hesitant to recruit friends or family to their own place of work.



SWEDEN FACTS

Violence

Swedes have very restrictive views on violence, domestic and otherwise. Parents are not allowed to discipline their children physically, nor are teachers or anyone else.. It is prohibited to hit anybody for any reason. Using physical violence is considered a sign of weakness, especially when a bigger person hits or hurts someone smaller. A stock phrase that depicts this is “Where common sense or ability to express oneself ends violence starts”.



Visiting friends and acquaintances

Swedes like to plan things. If you want to visit someone, call in advance and ask them if it is convenient. A Swede will find it embarrassing if their home isn't orderly or if they don't have anything to offer you when you come. A surprise visit may also disturb the Swedes' high need for privacy.

Understatements

'Jantelagen' is a term often used. It means that you should never think that you are better than anyone else. To be understated is important. What Swedes consider bragging would in many countries only be telling it like it is. If someone compliments you on a job well done or your new haircut, a Swede rarely responds with “thank you”. Instead we explain how easy it was and how anyone could have done it or that the haircut really doesn't look very good or that at least it wasn't expensive.



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS



1 January: New Year's Day

Nyårsdagen

New Year's Day is a public holiday in many places around the world and Sweden is no exception.

6 January: Epiphany

Trettondedagen

Epiphany is celebrated to commemorate the visit of the Biblical Magi to the Baby Jesus.

Moveable Friday in spring:

Good Friday

Långfredagen

Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Moveable Sunday in spring:

Easter Sunday

Påskdagen

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated on Easter Day.

Moveable Monday in

spring: Easter Monday

Andra påskdagen

Easter Monday is the day following Easter Day.

1 May: May Day

Valborgsmässoafton

May Day has been a public holiday in Sweden since 1939.

Moveable Thursday in

spring: Whit Sunday

Pingstafton

Whit Sunday is a traditional picnic day in Sweden.

Moveable Thursday in

spring: Ascension Day

Kristi himmelfärds dag

Ascension is a Christian holiday when the resurrected Jesus was taken up to heaven.

June 6: Sweden's National

Day

Sveriges nationaldag

Sweden has celebrated its National Day on 6 June since 1983.

19 June - 25 June:

Midsummer Eve

Midsommarafton

Midsummer is family outing and picnic time.

Saturday 20 June - 26 June:

Midsummer Day

Midsommardagen

A lot of the Midsummer festivities take place in the countryside.

Saturday 31 October -

6 November: All Saints' Day

Alla helgons dag

The following Sunday marks All Souls Day, a day usually reserved for visiting the graves of lost loved ones.

24-26 December: Christmas

Jul

Christmas is a family holiday spent together with family and loved ones.

December 31:

New Year's Eve

Nyår

As in many countries around the world, New Year's Eve is marked with great festivities and big firework displays.

SWEDISH FOOD

Swedish food is much more than just iconic meatballs and chewy fish-shaped sweets. If you want to know a herring from a crayfish and a kanelbulle from a prinsesstårta, here are ten vital facts about Swedish food traditions.

#1 Lingonberries go with anything

Just like ketchup and mustard, lingonberry jam is widely used to accompany a variety of dishes, from meatballs and pancakes to porridge and black pudding (blodpudding). But despite its sweetness, it is rarely used on bread. Thanks to the Right of Public Access (Allemansrätten), which gives everyone the freedom to roam and enjoy nature, many Swedes grow up picking lingonberries in the forest, and using these tiny tart red fruits to make a jam-like preserve.

#2 Pickled herring – centre of the smorgasbord

You might swap meatballs (köttbullar) for mini sausages (prinskorvar) or pick cured salmon (gravad lax) rather than smoked, but your smorgasbord wouldn't be complete without pickled herring (sill). This fishy favourite remains the basis of every typical Swedish buffet. With an abundance of herring in both the North and Baltic Seas, Swedes have been pickling since the Middle Ages, mainly as a way of preserving the fish for storage and transportation. Pickled herring comes in a variety of flavours – mustard, onion, garlic and dill, to name a few – and is often eaten with boiled potatoes, sour cream, chopped chives, sharp hard cheese, sometimes boiled eggs and, of course, crispbread.

#3 Crispbread – what's your favourite topping?

In addition to bread and butter, you'll often find a type of crispbread (knäckebröd) served alongside your main meal. This is what the Swedes tend to reach for. Once considered poor man's food, crispbread has been baked in Sweden for over 500 years, and it can last for at least a year if stored properly, and remains among the most versatile edible products. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) ran a campaign in the 1970s suggesting Swedes should eat six to eight slices of bread a day, including crispbread. This comes in various shapes, thicknesses and flavours, with entire store shelves devoted to it. Crispbread can be topped with anything from sliced boiled eggs and caviar squeezed from a tube for breakfast; to ham, cheese and cucumber slices for lunch; to just plain butter along with your dinner.

#4 Räksmörgås and other open sandwiches

When you order a sandwich, don't be surprised if it involves just a single slice of bread, the typical Swedish smörgås. The Swedish concept of open sandwiches dates back to the 1400s, when thick slabs of bread were used as plates. In Sweden, the shrimp sandwich

SWEDISH FOOD

(räksmörgås or räkmacka) remains the option fit for a king. Piled high with a mix of boiled egg slices, lettuce, tomato and cucumber, this seafood snack is often topped with creamy romsås – crème fraîche blended with dill sprigs and roe. Shrimp sandwiches are such an integral part of Swedish culture that they have inspired a popular saying: ‘glida in på en räkmacka’ (literally ‘glide in on a shrimp sandwich,’ but the actual meaning is roughly ‘get a free ride’), meaning to get an advantage without having done anything to deserve it.



#5 Pea soup and pancakes

Many Swedes grow up eating pea soup and pancakes (ärtsoppa och pannkakor) every Thursday. This tradition has been upheld by the Swedish Armed Forces since World War II. While its true origins are widely debated – from Catholics not eating meat on Fridays, thus filling up on pea soup on Thursdays, to pea soup being very easy to prepare by maid servants who would work half-days on Thursdays – the tradition has been well preserved. Most traditional lunch restaurants serve pea soup and pancakes with lingonberry jam or any kind of jam (sylt) on Thursdays.

#6 Prinsesstårta – a royal indulgence

Colouring the window displays of bakeries throughout Sweden is the all-time favourite green princess cake (prinsesstårta), topped with a bright pink sugar rose. Comprising layers of yellow sponge cake lined with jam and vanilla custard, and then finished off with a heavy topping of whipped cream, the cake is carefully sealed with a thin layer of sugary sweet green marzipan. A relatively recent addition to Sweden’s culinary history, princess cake debuted in the 1920s, courtesy of Jenny Åkerström. She was a teacher to King Gustav V’s brother Prince Carl Bernadotte’s daughters – Princesses Margaretha, Märtha and Astrid – who loved it so much that they inspired its name. While the third week of September is officially princess cake week, this popular cake is now eaten during special festivals and is used to mark many milestones in people’s lives. Today, it comes in a variety of colours – from the classic green to yellow for Easter, red at Christmas, orange for Halloween and white for weddings.

#7 The calendar of sweet delights

In Sweden, people can always find a good excuse to tuck into something sweet – so much so that specific calendar days are designated to the celebration of particular sugary spe-

SWEDISH FOOD

cialties. Cinnamon Bun Day (Kanelbullens dag) is celebrated on 4 October. Buns filled with cream and almond paste known as semlor are eaten on Shrove Tuesday or ‘Fat Tuesday’ (fettisdagen), as the Swedes call it – the day before Ash Wednesday (askonsdagen), the first day of Lent. Waffles (våfflor) are consumed on 25 March, and creamy sponge cakes decorated with chocolate or marzipan silhouettes of King Gustav II Adolf (Gustav Adolfs-bakelse) on 6 November in memory of the Swedish monarch who was killed on this day in 1632 in the Battle of Lützen.

#8 Crazy for crayfish

Crayfish parties (kräftskivor) are popular in August, when warm summer evenings are spent feasting on these red bite-sized freshwater shellfish – or saltwater shellfish (then called langoustine or, funnily enough, Norway lobster) – in gardens and on balconies all over Sweden. Eaten only by Sweden’s upper-class citizens and aristocracy in the 1500s, crayfish have become a national delicacy enjoyed by all, with mass importation having significantly brought down the price over the centuries.



#9 There’s something fishy about Surströmming

Every culture has at least one culinary speciality that makes both locals and visitors cringe. From late August to early September, a stinky tradition is upheld in Sweden, particularly in the northern part of the country. This is when cans of fermented sour Baltic herring (surströmming) are opened – a tradition dating back to the 1800s. The custom usually takes place outdoors due to the overpowering, unpleasant smell, which many compare with rotten eggs and raw sewage.

#10 Lördagsgodis (Saturday sweets)

The average Swedish family, with two adults and two children, eats 1.2 kilos of sweets per week – most of it on Saturday, sweets day. Upheld mostly to protect people’s teeth and prevent dental cavities, the once-a-week tradition is historically linked to dubious medical practices. In the 1940s and 1950s, the patients at Vipeholm Mental Hospital in Lund were fed large amounts of sweets to intentionally cause tooth decay, as part of a series of human experiments for research purposes. Based on findings from 1957 of the direct relationship between sweets and tooth decay, the Medical Board suggested Swedes eat sweets only once a week – an unwritten rule that many families still stick to.

IMPORTANT TIPS

Helpful Hints

Knowledge about Sweden's economy, high standard of living, sports, architecture, history, etc. is appreciated.

Remember to thank someone for dinner or gift upon next meeting.

Men should tip their hats to women and remove their hats while talking to women.

Do not praise another city or area in Sweden over the one you are presently visiting. Swedes are very proud of their own town or region.

Do not criticize Swedish lifestyle, sexual habits, suicide rate, prices, etc.

Do not compliment lightly. Insincere comments are considered rude.

Especially For Women

In Sweden, women make up 48% of the work force-- the highest percentage of working women in the world.

Foreign businesswomen are widely accepted and should encounter few problems conducting business in Sweden.

Businesswomen may pay the check in a restaurant without any embarrassment.

Be on time!

Swedes are neurotic about punctuality, agendas and time tables. Notably, we use a number of stock phrases that are significant for this way of thinking e.g. "Time is money" or "Don't waste time". It is considered very disrespectful to be late both professionally and privately.

If you are late, do call and let the waiting person(s) know and you will be easily forgiven. Always apologize if you are late.

There is something called the "academic quarter of an hour". That means if you are going to someone's home you may be fifteen minutes late- at the very most.

If a plane or bus is supposed to leave at a set time, Swedes get very frustrated if kept waiting. However, there are situations when we expect to be kept waiting, such as doctor's or dentist's appointments.

Calling others

On weekdays, you can call people between 9 am-10 pm. Don't call before 10 am on weekends. It is also considered bad form not to introduce yourself even if the person answering is not the one you are looking for. We sometimes introduce ourselves even though we dialled the wrong number in order to be polite.

IMPORTANT TIPS

If you are invited to someone's home or a party

If the invitation is in writing, you are expected to reply in writing. If you are invited in person or by telephone, you can accept or decline right away or call back with an answer. Also, be sure to check if there is a dress code. If the event is in someone's home ask for the door code.

- When you are invited to someone's home, do ask if the invitation is extended to your children or pets. If , the host/hostess have arranged for a baby-sitter they will not expect other children or pets as guests.
- Swedes often bring a gift when going to someone's home. Flowers or wine are appreciated gifts. If you have something from your own country, most people will appreciate that.
- Punctuality is a virtue. Seven o'clock means seven o'clock if you are invited for dinner. Chances are that the food is almost on the table. Arriving late is often inconvenient for often means inconveniencing the host/hostess.
- For table seating at informal affairs, usually the host/hostess will tell you where they want you to sit. On more formal occasions there will be a table seating plan at the door and/or name tags at each seat. If there is a table seat-

ing plan, the man finds the lady on his right and escorts her to the table. Only during the engagement period do couples sit next to one another, otherwise you will be assigned to a dinner companion. You are expected to make small talk throughout the meal and dance the first dance with your dinner companion.

- The meal is usually commenced by the host/hostess welcoming everyone and toasting. Don't drink anything but water before the first toast is made. When there are less than 8 people, don't eat before the host/hostess has taken the first bite or asked you to begin. When toasting, you should pick up your glass and try to look everyone in the eye (if you are less than 8 people at the table), then take a sip and afterwards again make eye contact with everyone before putting down your glass.
- If coffee is taken in a different room, stay with your dinner companion. Men usually bring women coffee.
- Call or write and thank the host/hostess within ten days. Try to reciprocate by inviting them to something.
- People rarely invite you to dinner twice in a row, but wait for you to return their invitation by arranging something.

IMPORTANT TIPS

Dining and Entertainment

To beckon a waiter, wave your hand and make eye contact.

Business entertaining is most often done in a restaurant during lunch or dinner. Business breakfasts are acceptable, but not as common as in the U.S. Business can be discussed at any time during a meal. Spouses may be included in business dinners.

Female guest of honor is seated to the right of the host. Male guest of honor is seated to left of the hostess.

Dinner is often served immediately at dinner parties. There may be no cocktail hour. Toasting is something of a formal ritual in Sweden. Don't take a drink until your host has given a toast.

Look into the eyes of the person being toasted and say Skål (Skohl).

Allow hosts and seniors in rank and age to toast first.

When toasting, make eye contact and nod to the others present, before putting your glass down.

The meal ends with the male guest of honor tapping his glass with a knife or spoon and thanking the hostess on behalf of all the guests. The female guest of honor should thank the host.

A butter knife is usually provided. Do not use a dinner knife for butter.

Always ask permission before smoking.

Keep your hands on the table at all times during a meal – not in your lap – and keep your elbows off the table.

It is polite to try everything served.

When finished eating, place knife and fork side by side on the plate in the 5:25 position.

Call or write the next day to thank your host and hostess.

Do not ask for a tour of your host's home unless you have a well established relationship.

Dress

Swedes wear fashionable, but often casual, European style warm clothing. It is important to be well dressed in public at all times. For business, men should wear conservative suits and ties. Women should wear dresses, suits, and pantsuits.

Gifts

Gifts are generally not exchanged in business, but it is common to give small Christmas gifts to a Swedish colleague. Gifts representative of one's business or home area are appropriate. When invited to someone's home, always bring a small gift for the hostess. If the host has children, a small gift of candy is appreciated.

Give flowers (unwrap before giving), wine (liquor is special because it is very expensive in Sweden), chocolates, books and recorded music. Do not give crystal or items made in Sweden.

Gifts are opened immediately.





PEOPLE IN SWEDEN

Sweden is a predominantly middle class country with one of the most far-reaching social security systems in the world. Patriotism is important to Swedes, who are very proud of their nation, towns and regions.

Meeting and Greeting

Shake hands with everyone present – men, women, and children – at business and social meetings. Shake hands again when leaving.

Younger people generally do not shake hands when meeting friends. Older people expect a handshake when being greeted or when leaving.

If no one is available to introduce you, shake each person's hand and introduce yourself.

Body Language

Generally, Swedes are reserved in body language. They do not embrace or touch

often in public. Maintain eye contact at all times while talking with someone.

First name basis

Swedes are informal and rarely use titles when addressing one another. We also call each other, often without age distinction, by our first name.

Friendships between men and women

Men and women often form friendships without being romantically involved. A woman can speak to a man without considering it as a sexual invitation.

FAMILY IN SWEDEN

Gender roles and equality

Most women in Sweden work outside the home both before and after marriage. They also continue working after having children, but after a maternity leave of 12-18 months. Not only is this because families need a dual income to survive, but it is also considered a woman's right for self fulfilment. Consequently, men are expected to do a larger burden of the work within the home and to be equally responsible for child rearing. However, most will agree that the domestic chores still largely fall under the woman's domain. It is also not unusual that mothers of young children engage in part time work in order to spend more time with their children.

When the children are ill, it is also more common for the mothers to stay home to care for them. This is often explained by the fact that the man is the primary breadwinner in the family and his income influences the family to a larger extent. Some traditional gestures are still upheld. For example, men often open doors for women and let them enter first. Men propose marriage even though it is also often a common decision between the two parties without involvement from the families.

In Sweden, family is extremely important and as such, the rights of children are well protected.

The rights afforded to Swedish families to ensure that they are able to adequately care for their children are some of the best rights in the world. An overview of these rights is as follows:

- Either the mother or father is entitled to be absent from work until their child reaches 18 months old.
- Either parent has the right to reduce their workload by 25% until their child reaches 8 years old (and is formally ready for school).
- A parental allowance is paid for 480 days, which is intended for both parents. Sixty of these days must be used by the 'minority' parents. For this reason, this element of the allowance is often known as 'Daddy's months'.
- You have the right to up to 60 days off per year to care for a sick child.
- However, a number of people in Sweden challenge the degree to which these rights are implemented, as statistics suggest that women often fall way behind their male colleague in terms of salary.
- Anyone travelling to Sweden will notice the family friendly environment of most restaurants and other such establishments. Even trains have a toy and play area.

DON'TS

Don't Use Highly Animated Body Language

Many non-Scandinavians don't realize how animated they can be in a conversation. And the more animated they get, the more excited they get, as can be overheard in many a conversation. This is the quickest way to irritate the locals, and you can expect to be gently reprimanded if your voice carries over to the next table. When you see a Swede unconsciously turning their body away from you, or shade their eyes as if they are blocking out the sun, take this as your cue; it's you they're trying to ward off.

Don't Feel Pressured by Silence

What you may perceive as an awkward silence, a Swede will perceive as a comfortable pause. "Don't say what you mean, mean what you say" aptly describes the way of a Swedish conversation. Swedes are direct communicators and every word is calculated to carry a meaning across. You will hardly ever overhear conversations that are filled with social pleasantries and small talk, so don't rush to fill the gap simply because you are used to keeping up constant chatter back home.

Don't Educate the Swedes

This can come across as extremely arrogant, whether you mean to or not. Don't assume that because Sweden is a neutral entity, Swedes are uninformed about the political complexities that go on in other countries. You will actually find the Swedes read a lot and take their education pretty seriously even from a young age. This is not to say that you cannot indulge them with inter-

esting snippets about your homeland, but don't be confrontational or look like a foreign know-it-all.

Don't Ignore Personal Space

The Swedes love their personal space. They are not touchy-feely by nature. In fact, don't even stand too close at the cash register in a shop. Don't sit next to someone on a bus if there is an open seat just for you elsewhere. Think about it; if a complete stranger sits next to you in an empty bus, wouldn't you too feel uncomfortable...or perhaps cling onto your handbag for dear life and look for the nearest escape route?

Don't be Flashy

Your trip might not be about making friends, but if you come to Sweden as the cast of Jersey Shore, you are in for a world of rebuking. The social filters will go up and your new local acquaintances will try to avoid you like a gunshot to the head. In Sweden, everything is done in moderation, from everyday clothing to late night clubbing in Stockholm. People have fun, but just enough without making a nuisance of themselves. Remember that loud antagonist at your local bar? You won't find them here, so considering this inclination towards moderation a blessing.

DONT'S

Don't Get Decaf

Learn to enjoy coffee in Sweden- do not ask for a decaf substitute, it's awful and not always available. Coffee and cinnamon buns might as well be the society glue, giving people a reason to get together and be social especially in Stockholm.

Don't Diss Swedish Beer...Or Anything Else

Or go on about how much better the beer is in your home country. In fact, don't talk about how much better anything is in your home county. It is rude and obnoxious, no matter where you go. Yes, the Swedish beer is much lighter and may taste like a watered-down version of your homebrew, but the Swedes happen to like it. If you don't like it, just enjoy a different drink.

Don't Assume All Swedes Speak English

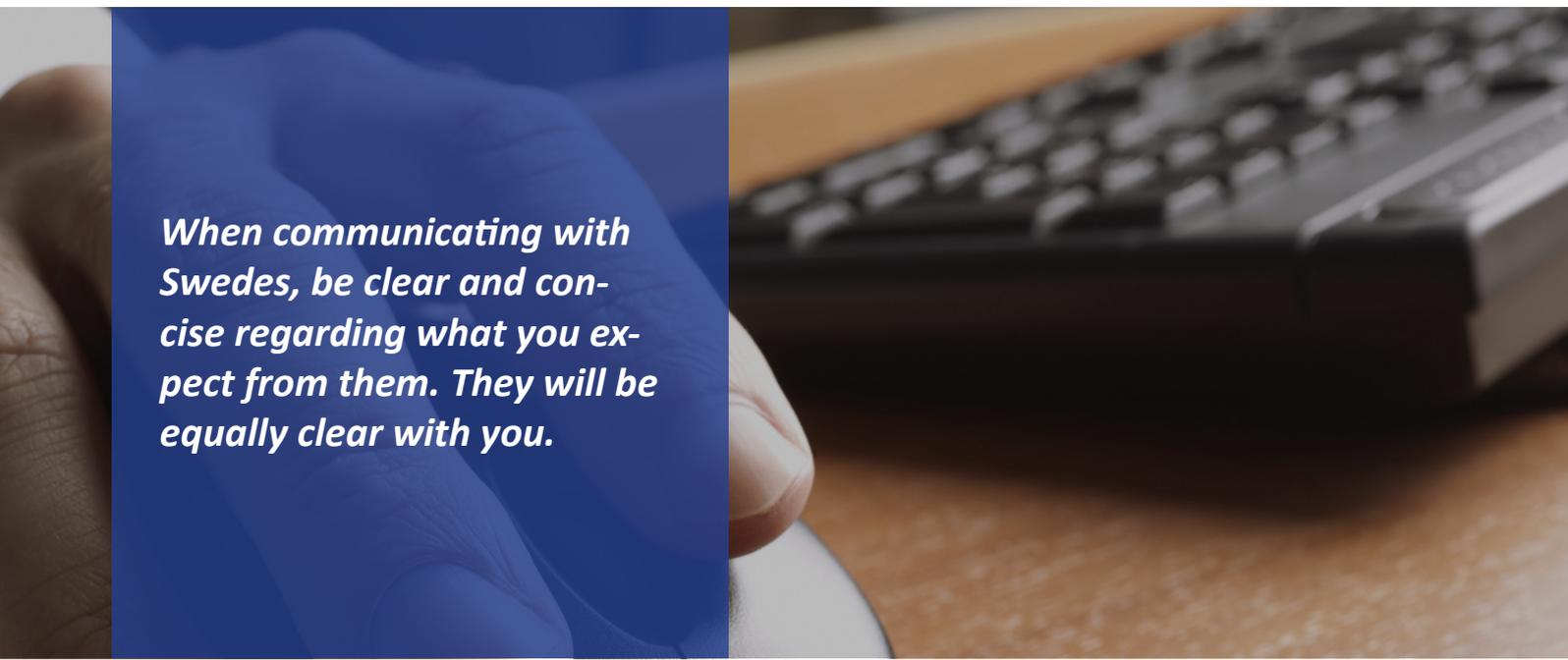
English might be a universal language, but don't expect to hear your mother tongue in most parts of Europe. In fact, you can only be guaranteed to hear English in the UK, but it is certainly not the predominant language in Sweden. This is not to say that Swedes can not speak English, but keep in mind that this is not their first language. Whatever you do, when you encounter a non-native English speaker in Sweden, do not raise your voice and speak more slowly to them as if they were raised in the back of a chicken coop. Learn a few basic Swedish phrases instead.

Don't Mention the Finnish Ice Hockey Team

When you are in Sweden, you support the Swedish Hockey team. End of story. This is the safest option, unless you want to start an argument. Don't mention any other hockey teams. For the time being, you are a Swedish hockey patriot! The Swedes and the Finns have a long and complex history, so anyone not from Sweden or Finland had best leave it at that.

Don't talk to strangers Swedes don't talk to strangers. We consider it strange behavior and like to keep our privacy.

CORPORATE CULTURE



When communicating with Swedes, be clear and concise regarding what you expect from them. They will be equally clear with you.

Swedes take punctuality for business meetings very seriously and expect you to do likewise. Call with an explanation if you are delayed.

Use last names and appropriate titles until specifically invited by your Swedish host or colleague to use first names.

English is commonly used in business. An interpreter is rarely necessary. Business cards in English are acceptable.

During business meetings, Swedes usually get right down to business after very brief cordialities. Agendas are clearly set for meetings with a stated purpose. Swedes are factual, practical, precise, reserved and get to the point quickly. Presentations are important. They should be clear, to the point and detailed.

Reports, briefings and presentations should

be backed up by facts, figures, tables and charts.

Swedes are generally tough negotiators. They are methodical and detailed, slow to change their positions and will push hard for concessions.

In the relatively small private sector, it is important to know who is who and how everyone fits in the corporate structure. Important decisions are often made by middle and lower level managers.

While decision-making may be a slow process, implementing decisions is often rapid.

Do not call a Swedish businessperson at home unless it is important and you have a well-established relationship with this person.

IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS

As always when you try to explain a people as a whole, generalizations are made and stereotypes are being used. In any case, it is always nice to have an idea about the habits of a nationality so that you are not misunderstood. Therefore, we have compiled a short list of how we act in different situations.



Family patterns

Children start school at six and day-care is provided for everyone before that to enable parents to work. The median is 2.1 children per family, which is rather high – one of the highest birthrates in Europe.

Several generations in the same household is uncommon in Sweden. Children leave the home in their late teens or early twenties, and usually live alone for a few years before starting their own families. The result is, of course, that young Swedish families cannot rely on the help and support from their parents to the same extent, and the opposite situation applies for the older generation when their needs increase. Old people have the option to live in adapted apartments with limited help or gradual steps toward an old people's home. It is not expected or demanded that children take care of their elders. As the fiscal climate tightens this may change.

Family news - births, birthdays, engagements, marriages and deaths

It is very common to announce family changes in the papers. Each daily newspaper has a page designated for family news. You place an announcement for a fee. To ensure that everyone sees the announcement many place them in the two major papers, Dagens Nyheter or Svenska Dagbladet. If you notice a change in a friend/colleague's family situation, it is customary to drop a note of congratulation or condolence.

Children's quarrels

Children are expected to solve their own disputes and parents are not too closely involved in their children's conflicts.

Answering the telephone

Most Swedes will answer their phone by saying either their first or last name or both. In some regions, it is common to answer with your own phone number. People rarely pick up and say hello without giving you any indication of where you have called.

IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS

Dating in Sweden

The equality between the sexes may be the reason for the lack of traditional courtship in Swedish relationships. Ask any Swedish man and he will assure you that females often call them and that they frequently split a dinner check in half. Going Dutch, even on dates, has clearly been adopted in Sweden.

Foreign females are often surprised by what they perceive as the Swedish males lack of attentiveness. Males coming from cultures where dating and courtship is part of life will find Swedish women very appreciative and sometimes confused by that form of interaction.

Courses

Swedes love to take classes outside of work. Various schools send their course bulletins straight to your home. Most of them are started by various unions for the members to develop new skills, however the selection is wide. Ceramics and arts and crafts are on offer as well as languages, bookkeeping, computers and dance classes. Most any interest can be triggered by a course available. The schools to look for are Folkuniversitetet, Medborgarskolan, and TBV.

Professional identity

Swedes identify themselves largely with their professions. One of the first questions a Swede will pose to a new acquaintance is: "What do you do for a living"? It is also common to say I am a computer consultant, rather than I work as a computer consultant. This has created problems as the rate of unemployment has become higher. Status is closely connected with a person's choice of profession instead of age, whom you are related to, personality, or other characteristics. However, not only high-status professions render respect, a job well done in any area is respected.





Language
voices
in Europe

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