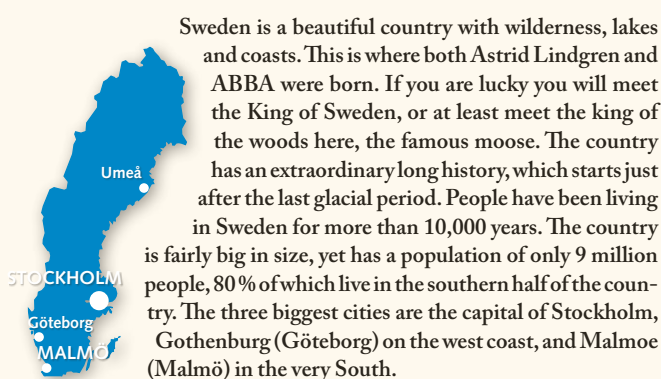




# PROGRAM COUNTRY: SWEDEN



*STS – more than 50 years of experience in student exchange programs all over the world*



Sweden is a beautiful country with wilderness, lakes and coasts. This is where both Astrid Lindgren and ABBA were born. If you are lucky you will meet the King of Sweden, or at least meet the king of the woods here, the famous moose. The country has an extraordinary long history, which starts just after the last glacial period. People have been living in Sweden for more than 10,000 years. The country is fairly big in size, yet has a population of only 9 million people, 80% of which live in the southern half of the country. The three biggest cities are the capital of Stockholm, Gothenburg (Göteborg) on the west coast, and Malmö (Malmö) in the very South.

## COUNTRY INFORMATION

**Area:** 450 295 square kilometres.

**Population:** 9,2 million.

**Capital:** Stockholm.

**Language:** Swedish (svenska).

**National holiday:** 6 June.

**Life expectancy:** 81 years.

Sweden is a Scandinavian country and is located in northern Europe. Many people think that the country consists of snow, polar bears and freezing temperatures all year round, but this is not the case. Sweden has a temperate climate, and is much warmer than other places at similar high altitudes. The northern part is colder than the rest of Sweden, and during the winters it gets much snow, which is perfect for those who love skiing. Summers in Sweden are rather warm, with average temperatures around 20°C in the middle of the country.

Carl Linnaeus, the father of botany, was born in Sweden. And what country could be more interesting to explore than Sweden, with its beautiful flora? This long and narrow country features a wide variety of landscapes, which are ideal for hiking and outdoor recreation. The northern part of Sweden is called Lapland and has a spectacular wilderness with forests, alpine peaks and the world famous ice hotel in Jukkasjärvi. In the very south, Skåne offers you lakes, stunning countryside and beaches. The "allmansrätt", literally meaning "everyman's right", makes Sweden a country to feel welcome in. This right of public access allows you to roam the countryside freely without permission from the land owner, as long as you do not disturb or destroy. You can go out in the woods and pick berries and mushrooms, or just sit down by a lake and relax.

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia. They have three children: Crown Princess Victoria, Princess Madeleine, and Prince Carl Filip. Sweden is currently led by the liberal Moderate Party, but the Social Democratic Party maintains a strong tradition in Sweden. Equality between men and women has made Sweden well known throughout the world.

Most Swedes have a good all-round education about the world, and immigration has made it a multicultural country. Many inventions come from Sweden, such as dynamite, ball bearings and Tetra Pak. You may also be familiar with Swedish multinational companies like VOLVO, SAAB, Ericson, IKEA and SKF, to name a few.

Swedes are healthy and do a lot of different exercise. Soccer is probably the most popular sport, but you will find a wide variety of physical activities available in most areas. Björn Borg, Carolina Klüft and Annika Sörenstam are some of the brilliant athletes that have inspired young Swedes. Music is also very popular and some bands are famous all over the world (ABBA, Robyn, the Cardigans and Roxette e.g.).

## SCHOOL LIFE

The public school system in Sweden is free and consists of nine years of compulsory school for children aged 7–16. The upper secondary school /high school is elective, but most students choose to continue. The grading system in Sweden is comprised of four different levels. IG= Fail, G= Pass, VG= Pass with distinction, and MVG= Pass with special distinction.

Swedish students go to school Monday through Friday, and classes generally start at eight and finish around three o'clock. Many schools have a flexible schedule where the students work in study groups or on projects. The school year is divided into two semesters. The fall semester runs from mid-August to mid-December, and spring semester from early January to mid-June.

High school students in Sweden can choose from a range of programs, such as economics, social science, natural science, arts and many more. Compulsory subjects in all programs are maths,



# PROGRAM COUNTRY: SWEDEN

English, Swedish, art, natural science, social science, religion and physical education. There is also a range of other subjects to choose from depending on what program you choose, and of course what school you attend. Some schools offer music, drama, computer science, marketing, and extra Swedish lessons. If the school offers extra Swedish lessons, we recommend that the students attend them. At some schools these courses are free of charge. No prior knowledge of Swedish is required to participate in the exchange program.

Transportation to school varies greatly depending on where you live, but school buses will take you from most places. If you live in the city, there's public transportation which the school sometimes will pay for. There is of course the alternative to walk or ride a bicycle if you live nearby.

School lunches are free of charge for Swedish students, and usually for exchange students as well. As a complement to the cafeteria, most schools also have a snack bar where students can purchase sandwiches and drinks between classes.

Swedish teenagers can be a bit shy when it comes to speaking English, so be prepared to take the first step towards a conversation. Ask them what they do in their spare time, on the weekends etc and ask if you can join them.

## HOST FAMILY LIFE

Swedes like to eat fish, meat, potatoes and pasta served together with a mixed salad. Swedish specialties include the famous meatballs and a delicious cinnamon roll called "kanelbulle". Swedish people love to celebrate their traditional festivities, especially "Lucia" just before Christmas, and "Midsummer" in the end of June. These occasions are a great opportunity to try the famous "Smorgasbord".

The majority of Swedish families only go to church for weddings, funerals, christenings, and national holidays like Christmas. The student doesn't have to come along, but it would be considered polite, and a good opportunity to experience something new.

Most Swedish host families live in the countryside, but some also live in the bigger cities. Swedish families are nice and friendly. They are a bit shy in the beginning, but once you get to know a Swede, you will have a wonderful friend for life. Most families consist of a mother, a father and an average of two children, but this is slowly changing. Many families these days are of the modern kind, which means that couples are divorced and live in new family setups or as single parents with equally shared custody.

Sweden is an equal society where both women and men work full time. The younger children are put in day-care between the ages of 1,5 and 6, when they start pre-school. Most families have a tight schedule, but are always keen on having a loving relationship with their children, partners and good friends. The Swedish host families are very eager to take good care of the exchange students and treat them like their own son or daughter.

Swedish teenagers are used to taking care of themselves and enjoy much freedom, but still the parents are quite strict on rules and daily chores. This also goes for the exchange student. Good communication generally solves any problems that could arise. The host family will help the student feel comfortable, but in order to make the most of the year, it is important that the student tries to speak Swedish as much as possible. The family will love hearing the student try, and the efforts will be greatly appreciated and encouraged, both at home and in school.

It is important for all students to show an interest in their new family and their day-to-day life. Swedes like when people are curious about them and want to get to know them, so don't hesitate to ask questions. They will also be keen on getting to know the student, about his/her interests, home country and family. The student should take every opportunity to make the year as Swedish as possible. Think positive and this will be the experience of a lifetime!

## PROGRAM EXTRAS

The students will get the chance to meet other students on exchange in Sweden on two occasions during the program: at the orientation meeting in Gothenburg in the fall, and on the trip to Stockholm in the spring. At the meeting in Gothenburg, exchange students will be joined by the Swedish returnees who have been on exchange abroad the previous year.

In Gothenburg, the students get the chance to visit the biggest amusement park in Scandinavia, Liseberg, and the science centre Universeum, where the students can walk through a rain forest with monkeys and snakes. The stay also includes a guided tour of Gothenburg and fun activities with students from all over the world. Accommodation is typically in a hostel, where the students share rooms with their new found friends.

The tour in Stockholm is a chance for everyone to see the beautiful capital of Sweden, visit the Old Town, and make exciting new friends.

## EUROPEAN TOUR

In the end of June, STS Head Office offers an amazing three-week bus tour around Europe. You get to visit 10 countries together with students from all over the world. The price includes accommodation, half board, sightseeing, most entrances and activities, Disneyland in Paris etc. Please see separate sheet for more detailed information regarding this tour.

