

Destination Guide for Sweden



Overview

Destination Guide Content

Destination Risk Levels

+ Low Medical Risk for Sweden

🛡️ Low Travel Risk for Sweden

Stockholm: LOW

Although the city is safer than most European capitals, there is a higher threat to business travellers in Stockholm than in the rest of Sweden, where the threat is insignificant. Business travellers are more vulnerable to petty street crime in the city, and there are residual concerns about the integration of the Muslim population, especially in the wake of the Islamist extremist threat. There is a higher risk of xenophobic attacks, though these are likely to focus on immigrant residents rather than business travellers. Basic security precautions are sufficient to mitigate any of the increased risks associated with Stockholm.

Standing Travel Advice

- Travel to Sweden can continue with standard security precautions.
- Take basic security precautions to mitigate the risks of petty theft and street crime, especially in the capital Stockholm.
- Organised criminal groups operating in Sweden are associated with most of the violent crime that takes place in and around urban centres. Associated shootings and explosions generally target members of rival gangs, though they pose an incidental risk to those in the immediate vicinity.
- There is a credible risk of terrorist attack by Islamist militants in Sweden. Government buildings, transport hubs and public areas are among the more likely targets. Report any suspicious packages or behaviour to the authorities.
- Security alerts or hoaxes can trigger the short-notice evacuation of transport hubs or public locations, which can cause disruption. Follow all directives issued by the authorities during any security operation and do not act on the basis of unverified information.

Active Alerts (1)

Notice

15 October 2024 at 06:12

Increase in pertussis infections, check vaccination status

Location: Sweden

Category: Pertussis (whooping cough)

Situation:

A significant increase in pertussis (whooping cough) infections has been reported across the country since April. Pertussis is highly contagious and spreads when infected people cough or sneeze droplets into the air. Early cold-like symptoms are followed by episodes of rapid and violent coughing. The illness can progress to being severe and life threatening. It can be treated with supportive measures and antibiotics, while prevention is achieved through vaccination and general hygiene.

Advice:

- Ensure you are fully immunised against pertussis. As immunity can wane over time, adults may be recommended a booster dose. A booster is also recommended for pregnant people, during the third trimester, and those who are in frequent contact with infants.
- Pay attention to personal hygiene and wash your hands often.
- Do not share items such as water bottles, drinks, lip balm, etc.
- Cover coughs and sneezes, and keep your distance from people who are obviously sick.
- Seek medical attention if symptoms develop.

More Detail:

The number of pertussis infections in 2024 is higher than those recorded in previous years. At least 18 counties have been affected and most infections have been reported in Skane, Stockholm and Västmanland. Authorities have urged people to take preventive measures and to stay up to date with pertussis vaccinations.

Globally, many countries have reported an increase in pertussis infections in 2024.

What is pertussis?

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease, which can be severe or even fatal. It is caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. The illness spreads from person to person. Infected people remain contagious up to 15 days after they develop a cough. Symptoms start with a runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild cough. The cough progresses to become severe, with 'paroxysms' (fits of coughing) with a classical 'whoop' when people are finally able to take a breath in. The coughing can trigger vomiting or be severe enough to break a rib. These coughing episodes may occur for up to ten weeks. Babies and people who are not vaccinated are most at risk of severe infection. Treatment is with antibiotics. Vaccination is effective in preventing infection and severe disease. However, boosters are required as immunity wanes.

For more information:

- See the International SOS Location Guide on Sweden.
- Contact any International SOS Assistance Centre.

Assessment:

Further cases may occur in the coming weeks, particularly among infants, older children and unvaccinated people.

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Before You Travel

Destination Guide Content

Visa Requirements

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

British

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Australian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Canadian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

US

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Visas

Citizens of countries referred to in the chart above and those of countries in the Schengen Area do not need a visa for stays up to three months in a six-month period. Nationals of other [countries](#) require a visa for stays up to 90 days, and these can take up to a month to acquire. Applications should be submitted in good time prior to the intended visit. Foreign nationals who intend to visit for more than 90 days or extend their stay beyond 90 days must apply for a visitor's [residence permit](#). For details on visa requirements, please visit the Swedish government's visa [website](#).

As per EU requirements, starting in mid-2025, nationals of [visa-exempt countries](#) will need to obtain a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) travel authorisation to visit any of the European countries mentioned [here](#) for up to 90 days within any 180-day period.

The exact date of its implementation is yet to be announced. For updates on the ETIAS launch date and new requirements, check the [ETIAS news corner](#). ETIAS applications can be made via official ETIAS website or the official ETIAS mobile app once it is operational. For information on travel documents required to apply for ETIAS and payment exemptions, visit [here](#).

ETIAS travel authorisation is valid for three years or until the travel document used in the application process expires, whichever comes first. It is for short-term stays and allows business travellers and foreign nationals to stay up to 90 days within any 180-day period. Most applications will be processed within minutes, however, in some cases it may take longer ranging from four to 30 days.

If your application is rejected, the email will provide the reasons for this decision. It will also include information about how to appeal, details of the competent authority, as well as the relevant time limit to appeal. Applicants of rejected ETIAS can also apply for ETIAS travel authorisation with limited validity. More information about this is available [here](#).

Cultural Tips

CULTURAL ISSUES AND ETIQUETTE

- There are no legal restrictions for LGBTQ+ individuals. Societal attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community are tolerant and accepting; violence is very rare.

Getting There

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

The main international airports are Stockholm-Arlanda Airport ([ARN](#)), Landvetter Airport ([GOT](#)) in Gothenburg, Stockholm Skavsta or Nyköping Airport ([NYO](#)) and Malmö's Sturup Airport ([MMX](#)). Security standards are excellent. Armed security guards ('skyddsvakt') are deployed at airports as a routine security measure and are not indicative of a heightened threat level. Poor weather conditions may delay or disrupt flight services during the winter season (November to March).

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website](#) for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

Sweden is a Schengen area country, which makes crossing its borders with other EU member states generally straightforward. However, the government temporarily reintroduced internal border controls from 12 November 2023 until 11 May 2024, citing 'serious threat to public order and internal security'.

By sea

There are extensive and efficient car ferry services connecting southern Sweden with Finland and the Baltic countries. These are punctual, reliable and generally safe, though petty crime and drunkenness can be problems on some of the longer international crossings.

Getting Around

BY AIR

There is an extensive domestic flight network, and small aircraft, seaplanes and helicopters can be hired to carry personnel to remote locations. The domestic airlines provide efficient services from Malmö (Skåne county) in the south to Kiruna (Norrbotten county) in the north. The standard of security and service on internal flights is excellent. [SAS](#) is the national carrier and runs an extensive service to and within Sweden.

BY ROAD

Traffic drives on the right. The country has an extensive road network. Fuel and parking are expensive, and parking facilities in city centres are inadequate. Distances outside urban centres can be long, while urban roads are often congested. The authorities impose strict penalties for drink-driving and speeding offences. The maximum speed limit is 70 miles per hour (110kph). Both drivers and passengers must wear seatbelts and headlights are mandatory at all times, even during the day.

Snow tyres are mandatory between 1 December and 31 March, owing to the potential for icy road conditions. Some roads are closed during the winter months, particularly in northern areas; check with the relevant authorities before setting off. Driving during the winter can prove challenging due to difficult driving conditions caused by snow and ice; therefore, self-driving during that period is not advisable.

Accidents involving collisions with animals are very common in all parts of the country. Large highways are generally surrounded by wildlife fencing, however, smaller roads are not. Drivers should proceed with caution at all times, especially around areas where road signs warn for wildlife crossings. Swedish regulations stipulate that drivers must have held a full driving licence for a minimum of one year before they are permitted to hire a car. Licences issued in other EU countries are acknowledged in Sweden and the country also recognises international driving permits. Most road signs are based on pictograms and text, if any, is in both Swedish and English. A congestion tax is levied on vehicles with Swedish registration plates. More information can be found on the transport agency [website](#).

BY TAXI

Taxis operate in cities and most provincial towns and are suitable for business travellers. Taxis can be hailed on the street or hired at taxi stands. It is advisable to use taxis when travelling alone late at night. Although all taxis have the fare list displayed both inside and outside the vehicle, only a few follow fixed rates. It is advisable to agree on a fare before setting off. Airport cabs have fixed prices throughout Sweden. Taxis are easily identifiable by the taxi sign on the roof. Credit cards are normally accepted. Taxi drivers may or may not speak English. It is advisable to have the address written down in Swedish by a local contact. The app-based transportation service Uber is also operating in [Stockholm](#), [Gothenburg](#) and [Malmo](#).

BY TRAIN

There are reliable, efficient and comfortable rail services, with routes extending far north. However, travelling by train can be expensive. The main railway companies operating in Sweden are [SJ](#) (national carrier), [MTR Express](#), [Snälltåget](#) and Arriva. The trains are modern and have first- and second-class cars. Sleeping facilities and buffet cars are available on long journeys. Further information about rail travel in Sweden is available on this [website](#).

BY OTHER MEANS

Sweden has a reliable public transportation system which is divided into 21 regional networks (*'lanstrafik'*). In addition of the commuter trains, reliable bus services operate in most cities and towns. Where available, trams, underground and boats are deemed secure to use for business travellers as well. For further information, please see the [Visit Sweden](#) website.

Business Women

BUSINESSWOMEN

There are no specific security concerns for female travellers or businesswomen. However, all women are advised to follow basic security precautions, such as not travelling alone on trains and other public transport at night, or walking alone after dark.

Working Week

WORKING WEEK

- Working Week: Monday to Friday
- Business hours: 09.30-18.00
- Banking hours: 10.00-15.00, Friday; until 16.00/17.30 on Thursdays

Language & Money

LANGUAGE

Swedish is the official language. English is also widely spoken. Attempting a few polite phrases in Swedish will be appreciated.

MONEY

The currency is the Swedish Krona (Skr/SEK). Credit cards are widely accepted in main shops, restaurants and hotels (though it is best to check beforehand). Foreign nationals may have difficulty using cards in smaller shops or rural areas. Credit cards like American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, Visa and Cirrus are widely accepted. Foreign currencies and traveller's cheques in pound, euro and US dollars can be exchanged at banks, bureaux de change, airports, railway stations, major hotels and ports at the official exchange rates. However, traveller's cheques are not widely accepted. ATMs are widely available.

Tipping

TIPPING

Service charges are included in all bills for hotels, restaurants and taxis, though good service in restaurants is often tipped up to an additional 10%.

Geography & Weather

GEOGRAPHY

Sweden is part of the Scandinavian Peninsula. It is bordered by Norway in the west and Finland in the north-east, and has long coastlines with the Baltic in the east and the south. Forests cover approximately 55% of the country's geographical area. Sweden also has a large number of lakes – Vanern being the largest. Sweden is divided into 21 counties which are further subdivided into 290 municipalities. Major cities include Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmo, Uppsala, Linkoping, Kiruna, Lulea, Umea and Orebro.

CLIMATE

Climate Overview

- The climate varies by region.
- The northernmost part of the country has a sub-Arctic climate with long, cold and snowy winters. Southern and central Sweden experience a temperate climate.
- Monitor the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute [website](#) for the latest weather updates.

Earthquakes

- Sweden is located in a zone with low seismic activity.

- Minor tremors can take place occasionally.

Flooding

- Low lying areas are prone to flooding due to heavy rainfall and melting snow.
- Landslides and avalanches, especially in mountainous regions, can occur due to heavy rainfall or melting snow.

Snowstorms

- Snowstorms are common especially in northern Sweden.
- Heavy snowfall tends to disrupt road and air travel, and can lead to public transport cancellations.
- In January 2024, heavy snowfall in southern Sweden blocked a major highway and led to thousands of motorists being trapped in their vehicles.
- Heavy snowfall can lead to road accidents.
- Power outages can also occur during and following snowstorms.

International Dialing & Power

DIALLING CODES

Country Code 46

IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialling) 00

NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialling) 0

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications throughout the country are of a high standard. High-speed internet and Wi-Fi connections are widely available. Telia, Tele2, Telenor and 3 are the major mobile network operators and 4G mobile internet coverage is available in all populated areas. However, mobile coverage in mountainous areas may be patchy.

ELECTRICITY

This is the most common plug type used:

Calendar

Holidays & Security Dates

2024

31 Oct Working day before All Saints' Day

Half day, banks only.

01 Nov All Saints Day

24 Dec Christmas Eve

25 Dec Christmas Day

In some countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

26 Dec Boxing Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is observed on the following Monday or Tuesday respectively.

31 Dec New Years Eve

2025

01 Jan New Year's Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

06 Jan Epiphany

30 Apr Walpurgis Night

Spring celebration on the day before Labour Day - half day, banks only

06 Jun National Day

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Medical

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Medical Care

Excellent

Standard of Health Care

Sweden's medical system is managed by the County Councils, which represent the geographic areas of the country. Travellers should not encounter any difficulty obtaining high quality medical care. Many doctors speak English. The standard of medical care in Stockholm is high. Although medical facilities in smaller cities and towns may be limited in certain specialties, they are sufficiently equipped to handle most medical cases. Primary care is accessed by registering with your local health center (*Vardcentralen*). Inpatient care and specialist care are available in both county hospitals and the regional specialist hospitals. There is a small but growing private sector.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance 112

Fire service 112

Police 112

Contact International SOS for help with your medical situation. [Contact us](#)

Hospitals & Clinics

Karolinska University Hospital (Huddinge)

Category: Hospital

Address: Halsovagen, Stockholm, Stockholm

Phones: [46 812380000](tel:46812380000),
[46 858580000](tel:46858580000)

Email: info.karolinska@regionstockholm.se

Karolinska University Hospital Solna

Category: Hospital

Address: 3 Eugeniavagen, Stockholm, Stockholm

Phone: [46 812370000](tel:46812370000)

Email: info.karolinska@regionstockholm.se

Vaccinations

COVID-19

Vaccination is recommended for all travellers.

Hepatitis A

Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis A vaccination for all travellers regardless of destination, especially those who are at higher risk (see [US CDC](#)), such as gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, people who use illicit drugs or those with liver disease.

Hepatitis B

Recommended for health care workers and anyone who may have a new sexual partner, share needles or get a tattoo or body piercing.

Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travellers and international assignees, regardless of destination.

Tickborne encephalitis

Recommended for:

- people who will spend time in forested or grassy areas during tick season (particularly those who will hike, camp, perform fieldwork, etc.);

- people residing in this country for longer periods (i.e., six months or more).

Routine Vaccinations

Influenza

Influenza occurs in:

- Temperate southern hemisphere: April to September.
- Temperate northern hemisphere: November to March.
- Tropics: year-round.

Annual vaccination is recommended. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe disease. People who are at higher risk for severe disease include:

- People over the age of 65.
- People with underlying health conditions.
- Pregnant women.

Measles-Mumps-Rubella

Vaccinations against measles, mumps and rubella are routine in childhood, and are usually available as a combined vaccine "MMR". See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)
All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need to be vaccinated.

Polio

Vaccination against polio is routine in childhood in many countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)
All adults should ensure they are immune to the disease before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or a *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis

Vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis are routine in childhood.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Varicella

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccinations are included in the routine childhood immunization schedule of some countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to varicella before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional.

Malaria

None

Yellow Fever

Routine and additional

Health Threats

Hantaviruses

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that belong to the *bunyaviridae* family. They can cause two different types of illness in humans: Haemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS) involves the kidneys while Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) involves the respiratory system. Regardless of which illness they cause, hantaviruses are carried by infected rodents. Virus is present in the animal's saliva, urine and faeces. Droplets of these excretions can contaminate the air in a process called aerosolisation. Humans become sick when they inhale the virus.

The incubation period of HPS is not positively known. Limited data suggests that people become sick within one to eight weeks after being exposed to the virus. The incubation period for HFRS is usually 1 to 2 weeks after exposure but could be as long as 8 weeks.

Initial symptoms of HPS include fatigue, fever, and muscle aches. About 50 percent of HPS patients also experience headache, dizziness, and abdominal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, pain). The "late stage" symptoms of HPS are cough/shortness of breath and a feeling of overall tightness in the chest. Heartbeat and breathing may both become rapid at this stage of illness. Symptoms of HFRS appear suddenly and include intense headaches, back and abdominal pain, fever, chills, nausea and blurred vision. As the disease progresses, patients may develop flushing of the face, inflammation, redness of the eyes or a rash. Later symptoms include bleeding from the skin, conjunctiva of the eye, and mouth. In the most severe cases renal failure develops.

There is no specific treatment or cure. Patients are treated supportively, meaning their symptoms are addressed even though the disease itself cannot be cured. Patients usually require hospitalisation in an intensive care unit. An antiviral medication, ribavirin, may be used to treat the HFRS although its effectiveness has not been proven in HPS.

There is no vaccine for HPS. Vaccines against HFRS are being used in many Asian countries. The best way to avoid infection is to eliminate rodents from your living space and worksite, and/or avoid contact with them. Keep food in tightly sealed containers, clean dishes immediately after use, do not leave pet food out all day, and seal holes to the outside – generally, make your environment inhospitable to rodents.

Cases are reported annually. Most activity is noted from northern region, particularly Vasterbotten, Norrbotten, Västernorrland and Jämtland counties.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

Rabies vaccination

Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need *post-exposure vaccination*, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

Rabies is present in bats only and the risk of exposure for average travellers is low.

Lyme disease

Lyme disease occurs in North America, Europe and Asia. It is transmitted to humans by the bite of a particular species of tick. Lyme disease can cause an expanding rash at the site of the bite, fever, arthritis and nerve problems such as facial palsy.

To prevent tick bites:

- Avoid tick habitats
- Use insect repellents
- Check daily for ticks

Lyme disease vaccination is no longer available.

If you develop a rash at the site of a tick bite or other symptoms of Lyme disease, seek medical attention. A course of antibiotics can cure Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is frequently reported in southern Sweden, particularly in coastal areas. Most cases occur from May through November in the forests of the southern coastal areas below 1500m / 4921ft and the Åland Islands.

Tickborne encephalitis

Tickborne encephalitis (TBE) is a viral infection which is mostly transmitted to people through tick bites. Ticks live in or near forests and are usually active during warmer months. TBE infection can also be acquired by consuming unpasteurized dairy products from infected cows, goats or sheep.

Most people will not have any symptoms. For those who do, initial symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea, and fatigue. These may resolve in a week or so, but if the infection spreads to the brain, the symptoms may become more severe (decreased mental state, severe headaches, convulsions, weakness and/or coma). TBE can be fatal. Prevention is through avoiding tick bites and vaccination.

The risk of TBE is present countrywide, especially in Uppland and Södermanland counties, the archipelago around Stockholm, the islands of Gotland and Åland, and forested areas around Gothenburg. Transmission typically occurs when ticks are active, from early spring to late autumn.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is predominantly a respiratory illness, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Transmission is from person to person via contaminated respiratory droplets. People are infected when these droplets are inhaled or land directly on the mouth/nose/eyes, or indirectly when transferred by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the mouth/nose/eyes.

Most people will develop a mild to moderate illness only which lasts up to two weeks, or have no symptoms. Symptoms vary greatly. Common symptoms include fever, cough and sore throat. Sometimes there is a loss of or change in the sense of smell or taste. The illness can progress to being severe and can be fatal. Older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of severe disease and death. Antiviral treatment is available and is particularly important for people at higher risk of severe illness.

Some people may continue to have symptoms that last for weeks or months after the initial infection has gone.

Prevention is through vaccination, hand hygiene, and physical distancing. Wearing a mask, and ensuring adequate ventilation in enclosed spaces can reduce the risk of infection.

The first imported COVID-19 cases were reported on 31 January 2020, with locally-acquired cases detected in early February.

See the Ministry of Health Sweden [COVID-19 website](#). An information line is available 24 hours per day - call 113 13. Call 1177 if you need help assessing your symptoms or advice on where to seek care.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and STIs

HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:

- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes are sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Food & Water

Generally safe

Food Risk

Food supplies are considered safe.

Water and Beverages

Tap water is considered safe.

Destination Guide for Sweden



Security

Destination Guide Content

Personal Security

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Travel to Sweden can continue with standard security precautions.
- Take basic security precautions to mitigate the risks of petty theft and street crime, especially in the capital Stockholm.
- Organised criminal groups operating in Sweden are associated with most of the violent crime that takes place in and around urban centres. Associated shootings and explosions generally target members of rival gangs, though they pose an incidental risk to those in the immediate vicinity.
- There is a credible risk of terrorist attack by Islamist militants in Sweden. Government buildings, transport hubs and public areas are among the more likely targets. Report any suspicious packages or behaviour to the authorities.
- Security alerts or hoaxes can trigger the short-notice evacuation of transport hubs or public locations, which can cause disruption. Follow all directives issued by the authorities during any security operation and do not act on the basis of unverified information.

Crime

Petty crime rare

CRIME

The level of crime is low. Petty crime, mainly pickpocketing, is the principal risk. Pickpockets generally work in pairs, with one person distracting the victim while the other picks the victim's pocket. The petty crime rate tends to rise during the peak summer months (June to August) as criminals take advantage of an influx of foreign nationals. Thieves operate in busy tourist areas such as the capital Stockholm's old town and on public transport. Remain vigilant while travelling on public transport and at main tourist

attractions, restaurants, museums and train stations. Other common crimes include mugging, residential burglary and credit card fraud.

In the rare instances where violent crime occurs, it usually relates to isolated domestic or personal disputes. However, gang-related violence remains a concern. An ongoing dispute between rival factions of a prominent gang resulted in a surge in violence in 2023. Such violence has mainly been reported in suburban neighbourhoods on the outskirts of urban centres, including Gothenburg (Vastra Gotaland county), Linkoping (Ostergotland county), Malmo (Skane county) and Stockholm. However, there is an increasing trend of bombings and shootings in more central locations as well as smaller rural towns, posing credible indirect risks to bystanders. These have received an increased amount of media coverage as criminal groups resort to more sophisticated means to attack each other.

Terrorism

Minimal risk to foreigners

TERRORISM

Islamist terrorism

Sweden is a potential target for Islamist extremists. However, the level of threat is lower in Sweden compared to other European countries that feature more prominently in Islamist extremist anti-Western rhetoric.

The most recent attack in the country took place in Stockholm in April 2017, when a truck was driven into pedestrians on Drottninggatan (Queen Street), killing five people and injuring 15 others. An Uzbek national suspected of having links to the extremist Islamic State (IS) group was sentenced to life in prison for carrying out the attack.

Since June 2023, there have been multiple instances of burnings of the Islamic holy book of the Koran. These have prompted calls for revenge on social media. Subsequently, the authorities in August raised the country's terror threat level from 'three' to 'four' (on a five-tier scale), indicating a 'high threat'. They said the decision was made based on a range of factors, including an increased threat posed by Islamist terror groups. However, the security agencies have sophisticated capabilities to deter terror threats.

Far-right terrorism

Migrant groups and perceived left-wing institutions have been targeted in far-right terrorist attacks. These attacks targeted people perceived to have a non-Swedish appearance, refugee centres and a left-wing cafe. However, no major incidents have been reported in recent years.

Kidnapping

KIDNAPPING

The risk of kidnap is low, with high-profile residents, particularly those involved in business with former Soviet countries, at greatest risk.

Social Unrest

SOCIAL UNREST

The majority of demonstrations in the country occur peacefully. However, protests by radical groups have a tendency to provoke counter-demonstrations, increasing the likelihood of clashes between rival groups. Demonstrations over government changes to the country's highly developed welfare system and by single-issue groups (such as environmentalists or those opposed to the EU) also take place.

Protests by immigrants are more likely to occur spontaneously and have previously degenerated into rioting. Such disturbances are usually restricted to established peripheral immigrant communities and are mostly short-lived and contained within the affected areas. A series of protests occurred from June to September 2023 over the burning of pages of the Islamic holy book of Koran. These resulted in violence, property damage and scuffles between counter-protesters and the police.