

A LOOK AT SWEDEN

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1 Map of Sweden	Sweden is one of the world's northernmost countries, located at the same latitude as Alaska and Siberia. But thanks to the warming effect of the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic, its climate is far milder. Sweden shares a border to the west with Norway, to the east with Finland. Otherwise it borders the Baltic and North Seas. In area, Sweden is Europe's fourth-largest country—a bit smaller than Spain but larger than California. It stretches 1,600 km (1,000 mi.) from north to south, roughly the same as the distance from its southern tip to Naples, Italy. Of Sweden's 8.6 million inhabitants, a million are either immigrants or have at least one immigrant parent.
2 The High Coast in Ångermanland province	Sweden was covered by glaciers 14,000 years ago. They withdrew north as the Ice Age ended, and the land began rising. Here on the High Coast, along the Gulf of Bothnia, the land rises fastest—about a meter (3.3 ft.) per century. In this part of Sweden there are vast forests and mighty rivers. Since the 1870s, important pulp and paper mills have been built at the mouths of these waterways. Hydroelectric power stations along most of the northern rivers have played a major role in Sweden's industrial development. Today, hydropower supplies more than half the electricity. The rest comes mainly from the country's twelve nuclear reactors.
3 Skåne, the southernmost province	Skåne, or Scania, is Sweden's southernmost province. Until 1658, it was part of Denmark. Most of Skåne consists of fertile plains, but the province is hilly in places. It supports extensive and varied farming. Despite its relatively small area, Skåne produces a substantial proportion of the country's food supplies. It is thus sometimes called the granary of Sweden. Skåne's many beautiful castles and idyllic old cities are certainly worth a visit.

Subject of slide	Comments
4 Stockholm, capital of Sweden	Stockholm, capital of Sweden, was founded in the 13th century. It is located where Lake Mälaren empties into the Baltic. Stockholm is built on a dozen islands, linked by 40 bridges. At its center is the original city—the picturesque Old Town. Stockholm is the site of Sweden’s Parliament—shown on this photo—and Government, many of its central government agencies and the headquarters of industrial and financial service groups along with various special-interest organizations. Greater Stockholm has nearly 1.5 million inhabitants.
5 Lapland, the northernmost province	Lapland is Sweden’s northernmost, largest and most sparsely populated province. Its eastern portion is covered with forests; to the northwest is a mountain chain, with Kebnekaise (2,114 meters, or 6,936 ft) as its highest peak. It is a province with major rivers and long lakes, as well as some of Sweden’s biggest national parks. Some of the mountains and rock formations contain iron, copper and other ores. Lapland and the provinces to its south are the home of many of Sweden’s 17,000 <i>sami</i> (Lapps), an indigenous ethnic minority who have lived here for thousands of years. About 3,000 of them still work in their traditional occupations: reindeer herding, hunting and fishing.
6 Archipelago scenery	Along the 7,600 km (4,700 mi) of Sweden’s coastline are a number of large archipelagoes, each with its own special character. This photo shows the Stockholm archipelago, with its 25,000 islands. Most of the islands close to the Swedish capital are forested and exuberant, but the skerries further toward the open sea are increasingly bare.
7 Runestone: a greeting from the Viking Age	The oldest known pictures left by people in Sweden are rock carvings with various ritual motifs from the Bronze Age, about 1500 B.C. The oldest runestones are from the 8th century A.D. Most of them, however, date from the 11th century. They often relate the deeds of some famous man from the district, including his trading voyages or war adventures across the seas.

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8 Visby, capital of Gotland and medieval Hansa city	The island of Gotland, located far out in the Baltic, has a rich heritage related to its role in the medieval North European trading empire called the Hanseatic League. Large portions of the Visby city wall, dating from this period, as well as the nearly 100 medieval churches scattered throughout Gotland, have been preserved. The island has beautiful natural scenery that looks different from the mainland because it rests on limestone, not harder bedrock. Gotland therefore boasts many kinds of orchids, and strange rock formations occupy some of its beaches.
9 The warship Vasa	The warship Vasa was intended as the biggest, most impressive ship in the navy of Gustav II Adolf (Gustavus Adolphus) at a time when Sweden was a major power fighting in the Thirty Years' War. Leaving Stockholm on her maiden voyage in 1628, the Vasa capsized and sank. She lay forgotten on the sea bottom for 300 years but was salvaged in 1961 largely intact. The ship and many objects from inside it have been preserved and can be viewed at the Vasa Museum in Stockholm. Sweden's Baltic empire reached its peak between 1658 and 1721 when it included Finland, present-day Estonia and Latvia and parts of north Germany.
10 King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia	King Carl XVI Gustaf has been Sweden's head of state since 1973. Under the Constitution, the monarch mainly represents Sweden and performs ceremonial functions. The journeys and contacts made by the royal family, both in Sweden and abroad, are of great importance because the royal family serves as a politically neutral symbol of the nation. In 1976 the king married German-born Silvia Sommerlath. They have three children: Crown Princess Viktoria, Princess Madeleine and Prince Carl Filip.

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11 The Swedish Parliament	Sweden's laws are made by its unicameral Parliament. Its 349 Members are elected for three-year terms under a proportional representation system. M.P.s from seven different political parties gained seats in the September 1991 election. The current Government (fall 1991) is a nonsocialist coalition of Moderates, Liberals, Center and Christian Democrats; it holds only a minority of the seats in Parliament.
12 A modern residential area	Swedish homes are very modern and well-equipped. About 40% of the population live in single- or two-family houses and the rest in apartments, either bought or rented. Between 1965 and 1975, a particularly large number of new apartment houses were built, using mass production techniques that unfortunately created monolithic, unimaginative outdoor and indoor environments in many new residential areas. By the 1980s, planners had learned from these mistakes and were creating more intimate, varied living environments.
13 Interior, with Swedish-designed furniture	Because the Swedes socialize largely at home—a custom partly explained by climate—they devote a lot of time and money to creating a pleasant home environment. Swedish interior decor traditionally favors light-colored wooden furniture, along with textiles and trim employing a rather subdued color scale. But international trends are shifting contemporary taste toward greater variety in home decor.
14 Vacation	Today nearly 85% of the inhabitants of Sweden live in cities and towns, but only a few generations ago the population was predominantly rural. This may be one reason why so many people own or rent vacation houses. Favorite leisure-time activities include such outdoor pursuits as hiking in the forests or mountains, jogging, skiing, picking berries or mushrooms, fishing and sailing. One key element behind these outdoor activities is the right of common access. This means everyone is entitled to walk freely through natural scenery, provided they behave in a responsible fashion and respect the privacy of landowners. Employees in Sweden have a five-week minimum paid vacation.

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15 Day care center	Almost as large a percentage of women as men in Sweden are gainfully employed. This means that most families with children are dependent on some kind of organized child care. About 60% of preschool children attend a day care center, usually municipally operated and financed by the municipal and national governments as well as by parent fees. Other small children receive home care, half of them from a parent who is being paid by the parental insurance system. Under this system, one parent at a time is entitled to paid leaves of absence from work that total 15 months—during the first 12 months at 80% of normal salary and during the remaining 3 months at SEK 60 per day.
16 Hospital scene	In recent decades, Swedish health care has undergone major changes. These have included investments in large, technologically well-equipped, specialized hospitals throughout the country, but also expanded primary care provided at local medical centers closer to people's homes. All residents of Sweden are covered by the national health insurance system. Most health care is provided by 23 county councils and three municipalities, and is free of charge, except for nominal patient fees.
17 The growing ranks of retired people	The population of Sweden is getting older. Today, life expectancy at birth is 81 years for women and 75 for men. A few years into the 21st century, a fifth of the population will be 65 or older. Such issues as the economic and social welfare situation of the elderly—pensions, housing, health care and activities—will thus become increasingly important. The government pays the same small basic (or social security) pension to everyone, plus a supplementary pension that is proportional to previous earned income. As a rule, people receive additional pensions on the basis of collective agreements between unions and employers.

Subject of slide	Comments
18 Leisure activities for the disabled	During the past 30 years, the situation of disabled people has improved greatly because of programs sponsored by the public sector. Organizations representing the disabled have served as important pressure groups and participants in these programs, which provide education, housing, rehabilitation and leisure activities. One area that has received much attention is sports; people with various disabilities have competed very successfully in Sweden and abroad.
19 Compulsory school, grades 1-3	Most children begin regular school at age 7, but this will eventually be lowered to age 6. The nine-year compulsory school is divided into three stages: grades 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9. Sweden has a standardized school system running from grade 1 to the final year of upper secondary school. It is operated by the municipal governments but is subject to considerable central government supervision. As a result, the standard of instruction is unusually uniform throughout the country. There are only a few private schools.
20 Computers in the classroom, grades 7-9	Pupils in grades 7-9 share the same basic curriculum, but they choose certain course alternatives and electives, especially foreign languages. Computers are very widely used in the schools. This is important in preparing pupils for future jobs. The use of computers has grown extremely fast in all fields and Sweden is among those countries with the most computers per capita in the world.
21 Upper secondary school	Today 90% of pupils who complete the nine-year compulsory school choose to continue to one of the many study lines, or majors, in the upper secondary school. These studies are now being made compulsory. Study lines take 3-4 years to complete (some practical programs today require only two years). They are either academic or combine practical and academic work. After upper secondary school—which customarily ends with a big graduation party—about 35% continue their studies at one of Sweden's 34 universities and colleges.

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22 Industrial product development	Swedish industry spends large sums on research and product development. During the 1980s these expenditures rose more than 10% a year. R&D spending was especially large in electronics, transportation technology and pharmaceuticals, shown on this photo. Companies in these sectors have also been highly successful as exporters of goods and services.
23 The Nobel Prize	The best known international award in the world is undoubtedly the Nobel Prize, established by Swedish inventor and industrialist Alfred Nobel in the late 19th century. Since 1901 annual prizes have been awarded to prominent people working in physics, chemistry, medicine and literature, and to a person or organization that has made a major contribution to peace. Under a donation from the Bank of Sweden, a Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel has also been awarded since 1969. In the photo, we see the 1990 Nobel Laureate in literature, Mexico's Octavio Paz, receiving his prize from King Carl XVI Gustaf.
24 Forestry	With forests—mainly spruce and pine—covering nearly 60% of Sweden's land area, forestry and the forest product industry are important economic sectors. Despite the large quantities of wood consumed by its mills, Sweden has perhaps never had such large forest resources as today. This is because at an early stage, the country introduced strict rules for harvesting and replanting trees. Forestry employs relatively few people because of far-reaching mechanization such as the use of automated tree harvesters.

Subject of slide	Comments
25 The forest product industry	Pulp and paper production has become far more concentrated and efficient in the past 30–40 years. Alongside Canada and the United States, Sweden is one of the world's leading pulp exporting countries. The most important products in the paper industry, where Sweden is the third-largest exporter, are newsprint and kraft liner. Printing and writing paper are also increasing their market share. Pulp and paper mills used to be among the biggest sources of industrial pollution, but in recent years Sweden's forest product, metallurgical and chemical industries have invested heavily in measures to protect the environment.
26 The steel industry	Iron mining and iron working were Sweden's first staple industries, along with agriculture. In modern times, the Swedish iron and steel industry has undergone major restructuring. Large commercial steel mills have lost much of their importance, while smaller specialty steel units now account for more than 40% of production. Swedish steel products sold in the world market include bearings, springs, razor blades and rock drill bits.
27 Industrial robots	At an early stage, Swedish companies began to develop, manufacture and use industrial robots to raise production efficiency. Today these devices are very common, especially in the engineering industry. Engineering is Sweden's largest exporting sector.
28 Computerized telephone exchange	One century-old Swedish telecommunications company that is maintaining and enlarging its market share is Ericsson. Its computerized AXE telephone exchanges have been installed in countries throughout the world. Ericsson is also highly successful in mobile telephone systems. Sweden's advanced telecommunications network and high per capita number of telephone lines have provided Ericsson with a good domestic base for its development work.

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29 Art handicraft and industrial design	To many people abroad, Swedish design is synonymous with beautiful art glass from the province of Småland, whose Glass District is the home of Orrefors, Kosta Boda and other famous names in glass and crystal. But Swedish designers are also producing attractive textiles, silver, ceramics, furniture, equipment for the disabled, and household utensils. Swedish industrial design demonstrates both playfulness and creative use of shapes and colors, along with a keen awareness of function and environment.
30 Göteborg, Sweden's biggest port	Göteborg (or Gothenburg) is Sweden's second-largest city, with more than 700,000 inhabitants including suburbs. Its port, Sweden's largest, handles a huge volume of cargo and provides berths for passenger lines sailing to Denmark, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. The city also has several major industrial plants. Also contributing to the role of Göteborg and adjacent Bohuslän province as Sweden's No. 1 maritime region are the many pleasure boats in its island-dotted archipelago.
31 The X 2000 high-speed train	In recent years, the transportation sector has grown rapidly. The number of cars has increased to 420 per thousand inhabitants. Domestic and international air traffic has expanded heavily. The Swedish State Railways (SJ) have begun a large-scale investment program that includes improving the standards and straightness of tracks, the environment and technology of stations, and the quality of rolling stock. A high-speed train called the X 2000—running at a maximum speed of 200 kph (120 mph) on existing tracks—has been developed and is now in regular use.
32 Artistic decor in Stockholm subway stations	Large sums are also being invested in developing other mass transit alternatives to reduce environmental disruption in cities and towns. They include ring roads, expanded light rail systems and cleaner bus exhausts. But transportation is not just a matter of technology. Artists have decorated half of the 98 stations in the Stockholm subway system—sometimes called the world's longest art gallery.

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33 Pernilla Wiberg, 1991 World Cup slalom champion	Skiing is extremely popular in Sweden, both as a form of exercise and a competitive sport. Swedish cross-country skiers have traditionally been very successful, but in recent years, downhill skiers have also captured headlines. A few years ago Ingemar Stenmark was the Swede most likely to win top prizes at international tournaments, but in 1991 the winner of the slalom World Cup for women was Pernilla Wiberg. Other sports where Swedes are among the world elite are tennis, ice hockey and table tennis.
34 Sports fishing	Fishing is a popular leisure pastime for a quarter of the population. Game fish abound everywhere in Sweden—along the coastline, in the swift-flowing rivers of the north, in the slow streams of the south, in tens of thousands of lakes, and even in the heart of Stockholm.
35 The Drottningholm Court Theater	Swedish culture enjoyed a golden age in the late 18th century. Painting, sculpture, music, literature and the theater flourished, with King Gustav III as a major patron of the arts. In 1784 he built the first Stockholm Opera. He also wrote and acted in productions at the theater shown here—built in 1766 at nearby Drottningholm Palace. It is still in use today, including the original stage machinery. Today many Swedish cities have lively theater traditions, and in Stockholm the number of stages and productions is impressive.
36 The Cullberg Ballet Company	Dance is a thriving art form in Sweden and has a permanent theater of its own in Stockholm—the House of Dance—with a generous-sized stage and an auditorium seating 800 people. Among the most important and colorful innovators in dance have been Birgit Cullberg and her company. For many years, the Cullberg Ballet Company has presented inspired and provocative productions to audiences throughout Sweden and abroad. They include their well-known version of “Giselle”.

Subject of slide	Comments
37 Choral singing	Choral singing is among Sweden's most popular leisure activities, with about half a million singers belonging to more than one thousand choirs of different size. Church and secular choirs are found even in small communities, making choral singing one of the most widely represented musical activities in the country.
38 The smörgåsbord	The smörgåsbord, a huge buffet of cold and hot dishes, is regarded as something genuinely Swedish. The basic ingredients of any smörgåsbord are usually a number of cold fish dishes, several types of cold cuts, one or more hot dishes and a selection of desserts. Its composition may vary, depending on the region and the time of year.
39 The festival of St. Lucia	There is very little daylight in Sweden on December 13, just before the winter solstice. The holiday now celebrated on this date took shape only during the 20th century. St. Lucia, the "queen of light," was originally the patron saint of the blind. She is accompanied by white-clad girls and boys, and often by small Santas as portents of Christmas. "Lucia processions" take place early in the morning at schools, day care centers, workplaces, hospitals and many other locations. After singing traditional St. Lucia and Christmas songs, the participants usually serve coffee, saffron rolls and ginger snaps.
40 A Midsummer Night celebration	When summer is at its peak in late June, the Swedes celebrate Midsummer. This festival has ancient traditions, probably going back to heathen fertility rites. Midsummer Night customs vary in different parts of the country, but in all provinces, local inhabitants decorate a maypole with flowers and raise it outdoors, then indulge in singing, folk dancing and games.

Some basic facts on Sweden

Geography and climate

Total area: 449,964 km²
(173,731 sq.mi.)

Max. distance north-south: 1,574 km
(977 mi.)

Max. distance east-west: 499 km
(310 mi.)

Biggest lake:
Vänern 5,585 km² (3,468 sq.mi.)

Longest river:
Muonio/Torne River 570 km
(354 mi.)

Daily average temperature, July:
Malmö +17.2°C (63°F)
Stockholm +17.8°C (64°F)
Kiruna +12.8°C (55°F)

Daily average temperature, February:
Malmö -0.7°C (31°F)
Stockholm -3.1°C (26°F)
Kiruna -12.9°C (9°F)

Yearly average precipitation:
Malmö 560 mm (22 in.)
Stockholm 560 mm (22 in.)
Kiruna 510 mm (20 in.)

Population

Total population, 1990 8,591,000

Population in major urban areas,
1990

Stockholm	1,492,000
Göteborg (Gothenburg)	731,000
Malmö	475,000

Density of population:

National average: 20 inhabitants per
km² (52 per sq.mi.)

County of Stockholm: 231 per km²

County of Norrbotten: 3 per km²

Population change, per thousand
inhabitants, 1990

Birth rate	14.46
Mortality rate	11.1
Natural population increase	3.3
Net immigration	4.0

Major categories of foreign residents,
1989

Finns	124,000
Yugoslavs	39,600
Iranians	35,100
Norwegians	35,000
Danes	28,000
Turcs	24,100
Chileans	19,000
Poles	14,700
Germans	12,000

Religion

95% belong to the Church of Sweden (Lutheran); important religious minorities are the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and the Pentecostal Movement

Economy and labor market

Currency: Swedish krona (SEK)
= USD 0.17 or GBP 0.10
(approximately, October 1991)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 1990

Total GDP: SEK 1,340 billion

GDP per capita: SEK 157,000

Contribution to GDP by economic sectors, 1990, in %

Agriculture, forestry, fishing	2.8
Mining and manufacturing	22.1
Electricity, gas, waterworks	2.8
Building and construction	7.8
Wholesale and retail trades, hotels and restaurants	10.8
Other private and business services	30.7
Central government	5.1
Local governments	17.9

Expenditure of GDP, 1990, in %

Private consumption	53
Government consumption	27
Central government	8
Gross fixed investments	22
Mining and manufacturing	4
Change in stocks	0
Exports of goods and services	37
Imports of goods and services	39

Foreign trade shares by areas and countries, 1990, in %

	Exports	Imports
EFTA	19.0	18.2
Norway	8.3	7.9
EC	54.1	55.3
F.R. of Germany	14.2	19.4
United Kingdom	10.1	8.1
Other industrialized countries	13.9	15.0
USA	8.6	8.7
Japan	2.1	5.1
State trading countries	2.6	3.5
USSR	0.7	1.4
Developing countries	9.4	7.5

Employment by sector, as % of total labor force, 1990

Agriculture, forestry, fishing	3.6
Mining and manufacturing	20.9
Electricity, gas, water works	0.7
Construction and building	6.6
Wholesale and retail trades, hotels and restaurants	14.1
Other private and business services	20.7
Central government	6.2
Local governments	25.6
Unemployed (Oct 1991)	3.0

Politics

Parties in Parliament, elections 1991

	% of votes	No. of seats
Moderate Party	21.9	80
Liberal Party	9.1	33
Center Party	8.5	31
Christian Democratic Party	7.1	26
New Democracy	6.7	25
Social Democratic Party	37.6	138
Left Party	4.5	16

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Produced by the Swedish Institute, 1991
Translated by Victor Kayfetz
Printed in Sweden, November 1991



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