Sweden, Norway & Denmark Information

Sweden, Norway and Denmark are highlighted by charming, pristine cities, spectacular fjords, and a smorgasbord of cultural traditions. From Viking lore to pop culture icons and unmatched hospitality, these Nordic lands are sure to enthrall and delight. And with surroundings as serene as this, you’ll come to understand how they became host to the world’s most revered peace prize.

History

As merchant seamen, well known for their far-reaching trade, the Nordic Vikings dominated Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries. Many historians credit the Vikings with the first European discovery of the Americas, with the exploits of Leif Ericsson around 1000.

In 1397, Queen Margaret of Denmark united Sweden (which included Finland), Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Greenland and other territories into the Kalmar Union. Tension within the countries gradually led to open conflict and the union split in the early sixteenth century. A long-lived rivalry ensued with Norway and Denmark on one side and Sweden and Finland on the other. During the seventeenth century, Sweden-Finland emerged as a great power. Its contributions during the Thirty Years' War under Gustavus Adolphus determined the political, as well as religious, balance of power in Europe. At its zenith in 1658, Sweden ruled several provinces of Denmark, as well as parts of present-day Germany, Russia, Estonia and Latvia.

In 1813, Sweden joined the allies against Napoleon, which resulted in the acquisition of Norway from Denmark (an ally of Napoleon). The merger lasted until 1905, when Norway peaceably gained its independence. Sweden has not participated in any war in almost two centuries. An “armed neutrality” was maintained by the country throughout both World Wars. Denmark and Norway attempted the same but were inevitably drawn into the conflict by the end of the second World War after being occupied by Nazi Germany. While Denmark became an early member of the EU in 1973, indecision over Sweden’s role in the political and economic integration of Europe delayed its entry into the EU until 1995. For now, Norway has decided not to join the EU community.

Fast Facts
Denmark Fast Facts
Capital: Copenhagen
Population: 5.5 million
Language: Danish
Currency: Danish krone (DKK)
Time Zone: EST plus 6 hours
Electricity: 220V, 50Hz

Norway Fast Facts
Capital: Oslo
Population: 4.6 million
Language: Norwegian, English
Currency: Norwegian krone (NOK)
Time Zone: EST plus 6 hours
Electricity: 220V, 50Hz

Sweden Fast Facts
Capital: Stockholm
Population: 9 million
Language: Swedish, English
Currency: Swedish krona (SEK)
Time Zone: EST plus 6 hours
Electricity: 220V, 50Hz

Books
- The Best Intentions, Ingmar Bergman
- Hamlet, William Shakespeare
- Pippi Longstocking, Astrid Lindgren
- Swedish Folktales and Legends, by Lone Thygesen Blecher

Videos
- Smiles of a Summer Night (1957)
- Pelle the Conqueror (1988)
- Under the Sun (1999)
- Italian for Beginners (2000)
- Holidays & Festivals

January
- Odense Winter Jazz Festival (Denmark)

January 6
- Epiphany

February
- Winter Arts Festival (Norway)
February  Great Sami Winter Market (Sweden)
April    Bergen Music Festival (Norway)
April 30  Walpurgis Night (Sweden)
May     Bergen International Festival (Norway)
May 1    Labor Day
May 17   Constitution Day (Norway)
June     Roskilde Festival (Denmark)
June     Taste of Stockholm
June     Midsummer Day
June 5   Constitution Day (Denmark)
July     Midtfyns Festival (Denmark)
July     Copenhagen Jazz Festival
August   Seafood Festival (Norway)
August   Tønder Festival (Denmark)
September Arhus Festival (Denmark)
October 5 Republic Day (Denmark)
December Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony
December 13 St. Lucia Day (Sweden)
December 26 Boxing Day

Weather

Given the latitude, Denmark, Sweden and Norway enjoy surprisingly mild weather. Rain falls mainly in the spring, while summers stay pleasant and winters are, well, wintry. Pack lightweight clothes with a few warm layers in the summer and autumn. Rain gear is essential in spring. Bring warm clothes, heavy coats and boots for winter.

Average Temperatures
<table>
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<th>January</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>October</th>
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<td>58°</td>
<td>44°</td>
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Temperatures are in °F. For specific weather information, visit www.accuweather.com.

**Tips for Tipping**

**Denmark**
Some restaurants, usually larger ones, add a service charge. Waiters in Denmark do not expect a tip, but it is always appreciated. Hotel porters get around five Danish krone per bag.

**Norway**
A 10 to 12 percent service charge is added to most bills at hotels and restaurants. If you experience exceptional service, give an additional 5 to 10 percent tip. If the porter helps with your luggage, give around 15 Norwegian krone.

**Sweden**
At hotels it is customary to tip the porter about five Swedish krona per item. A potentially unpleasant feature of the Swedish restaurant scene is that you must often check your coat or sports jacket, regardless of whether you wish to do so; the tip (or cost) for this is usually 10 Swedish krona.

**Did you know?**

- Some well-known Swedish imports include: Absolut Vodka, Volvo, Greta Garbo, H&M, IKEA, Saab, Ace of Base and ABBA.
- Summer turns the northernmost reaches of Norway and Sweden into lands of endless day. The sun doesn’t set in North Cape, Norway, from May 13 to July 29.
- She may be Copenhagen’s star attraction, but the statue of the Little Mermaid has had to overcome some fairly traumatic experiences over the years. Among other insults, she has endured two decapitations, the amputation of her right arm, and the unsolicited addition of a bra and a pair of knickers.
- Only Saudi Arabia and Russia export more oil than Norway.
The Nobel Peace Prize was the brainchild of Swedish chemist Albert Nobel, who invented dynamite—an invention he had hoped would end all wars. Although he would not see peace in his time, Nobel left his fortune to be awarded to the world’s greatest peacemakers for many years to come.