

Sweden national day

Swedish society and the Swedish model drove nation onward

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AMBASSADOR OF SWEDEN

Sweden has been praised internationally for providing a recipe for success in times of economic crisis. The Swedish welfare model seems to have stood the test of time.



Sweden remains one of the most egalitarian countries in terms of income distribution, and has one of the world's lowest levels of poverty. It's no surprise that Sweden consistently appears near the top of the Human Development Index, which ranks countries according to life expectancy, education and standard of living. While Swedes pay high taxes to maintain their prized social welfare system, they are no longer the highest-taxed people in the world.

Sweden has succeeded in creating a balance between social equality and economic success. Education is free (except for nursery schools and higher education, which are partly funded by the government), health care is cheap, child care is universal and the streets are clean — but there is still the opportunity to control your own economic destiny.

The driving forces behind "the Swedish model" are still alive, although the model is not as all-encompassing as it once was. There is greater privatization in the health care sector and the number of private schools is growing rapidly. But today all parties of the political spectrum talk of maintaining the

welfare state, since Sweden's voters would simply not stand for a dismantling of it.

The Swedish model was born in 1938 with the signing of the Saltsjöbaden Agreement. This groundbreaking labor market treaty between strong trade unions, innovative companies and a solid welfare state acknowledged each actor's importance in creating a stable and prosperous society and became a model for other agreements. Even if the concept of Swedish welfare has changed over the years, the core remains: a firmly rooted notion that everyone should have access to publicly financed education, health care, child care and elderly care.

Swedish lifestyle

The Swedish lifestyle brings together a love of nature, good housing, environmental thinking and lots of culture — all tied up with awareness of health and a strong sense of equality. Efficiency is combined with a laid-back attitude, and old traditions blended with openness for new technologies. Swedes in general work hard but treasure their free time and enjoy long, relaxing holidays.

The Swedish lifestyle varies greatly with the seasons. During the darker winter months, there are lights in the windows, evenings in the cinema and winter sports during the day. In spring and summer, life is lived outdoors: music festivals, outdoor theaters and open-air museums are popular. Not only are the flowers blooming, the Swedes themselves are, too.

Traditions such as June's Midsummer and December's

Lucia are of great importance to Swedes and are celebrated just as enthusiastically today as they have been for generations. This sense of heritage is mixed with an open-mindedness for other cultures, due to the fact that one-fifth of the population has roots in other countries, that Swedes travel a great deal and that they speak other languages. The most innovative country in the world, as highlighted by numerous reports, is not only the home of inventors and entrepreneurs but also a creative hub for fashion, music and food.

Tourism in Sweden

Tourism is Sweden's fastest growing sector, offering the Arctic wilderness of the far north, ultra-cool urban fashion shows in the cities and five-star culinary adventures all over the country.

"Nature tourism" is one of Sweden's biggest attractions, with visitors from around the world drawn by the country's stunning nature and untouched wilderness. At the top of many travelers' wish list is Lapland, with its unique scenery and once-in-a-lifetime experiences



Unique: There are several "nature tourism" adventures to Lapland in which tourists can explore the Sami culture.

STEFFAN WIDSTRAND / IMAGEBANK.SWEDEN.SE

such as the midnight sun, the northern lights (aurora borealis), winter's Arctic chill and a mystical silence.

The Swedish capital of Stockholm has long been famed for its idyllic setting — sprawled across 14 islands — and its rich cultural heritage. The city has also built a reputation as a global center of dynamic design, cutting-edge fashion, and innovative cuisine, music and art.

On the west coast, Sweden's second largest city, Goteborg, has plenty to offer with its vibrant entertainment scene and multitude of cultural experiences.

Cosmopolitan Malmö, in the

far south of Sweden, is linked to the Danish capital of Copenhagen via the Öresund Bridge. Together, they make a thriving metropolitan region.

Swedish education

From preschool onward, Swedes are encouraged to think independently. It's one way Sweden maintains its long and proud tradition of innovation.

This innovative spirit can be seen in the fact that Sweden consistently tops European rankings in terms of research investments as a percentage of GDP and in the number of published scientific works per capita.

The educational system is based on tax-financed education for all, supported by publicly subsidized programs for further education, retraining, adult schools and study groups. The private business sector, meanwhile, offers an advanced system of further education and



Education: All Swedish schools are required by law to provide free lunches for the students. In Sweden, free lunch has been served since the 1940s and it is an important part of the education system. LENA GRANEFELT / IMAGEBANK.SWEDEN.SE

self-improvement.

No one is left behind; the Education Act states that children in need of special assistance at school should receive it. The law

also says there must be equality in education for all children, wherever they live in Sweden and regardless of ability or disability.

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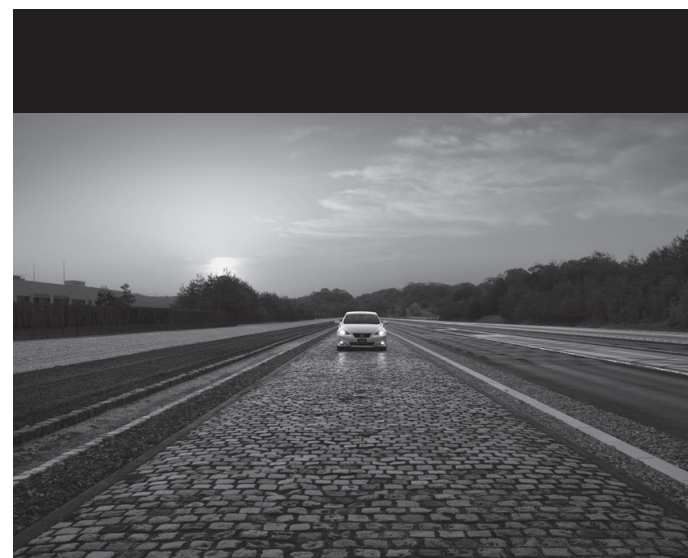


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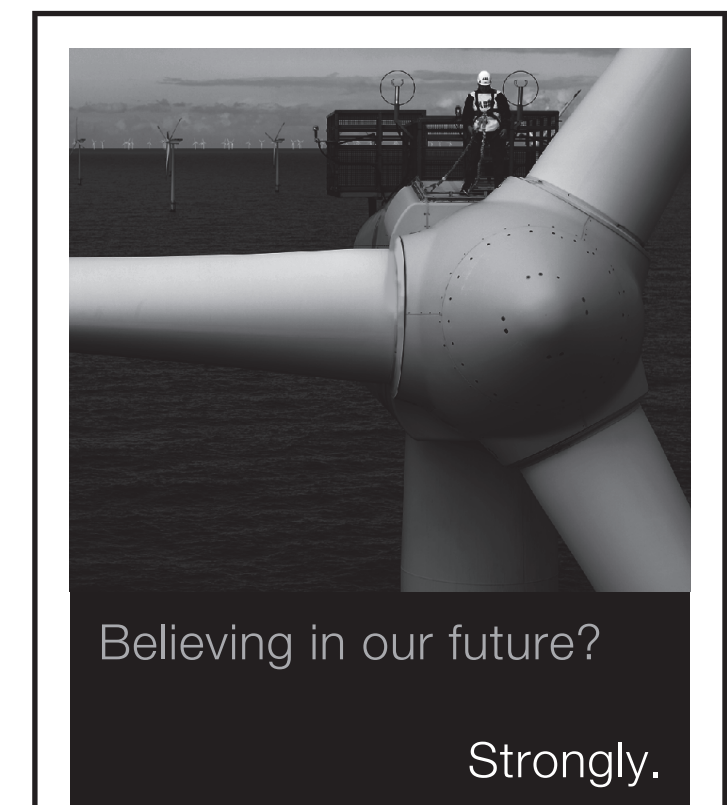


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