

Do's and don'ts in Sweden

Sweden is fantastic!

The above phrase is often used ironically, especially when we are talking about our *fantastic* bureaucracy or our *fantastic* rules, regulations and laws – not to mention our *fantastic* taxes which we firmly believe are the highest in the world!



But we also DO believe that our country is fantastic, especially in the summer time. We believe our scenery and countryside is outstanding. The Swedes are a sun loving people, since we are not so used to neither long, sunny nor hot summers.

Meeting People

Most Swedes are able to speak English very fluently. Upon meeting a Swede, make a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact. Young people normally don't shake hands. In general, many Swedish people are reserved in their body language and do not kiss, embrace, or touch each other often in public. To open a conversation, you can always start talking about the weather. Swedes like to keep their personal lives to themselves. A good topic is to discuss travel destinations; they love to travel – especially in the winters. Swedish speakers are generally in the habit of taking long breaks between thoughts; be patient.

Be sure you are in a smoking area before lighting a cigarette. Smoking is forbidden in most places, bars and restaurants included.

If you want to address someone directly, you always use the person's first name.

Punctuality

Punctuality is important in Sweden and is considered a matter of respect. The emphasis on time can be seen in everyday business contacts, as well as in social situations.

Table manners

Table manners are continental, the fork is held in the left and the knife in the right hand while eating. Do not begin eating until your host or hostess says "smaklig måltid." The host gives the first toast. Everyone lifts glasses, looks the persons making the toast and the rest of the guest in the eyes and says "skål"