Sweden

Von Wikipedia - die freie Nachrichtenenzyklopädie

"Sweden" (pronounced "svě́nd", officially the "Kingdom of Sweden" (Swedish: Sverige), is a Nordic country on the Scandinavian Peninsula in Northern Europe. Sweden borders with Norway and Finland and is connected to Denmark by a bridge-tunnel across the Oresund.

At present, Sweden is the third largest country in the European Union by area, with a total population of about 9.4 million. Sweden has a low population density of with the population mostly concentrated to the southern half of the country. About 85% of the population live in urban areas.


Sweden emerged as an independent and unified country during the Middle Ages. In the 17th century, the country expanded its territories to form the Swedish Empire. The empire grew to be among the great powers of Europe in the 17th and early 18th century. Most of the conquered territories outside the Scandinavian Peninsula were lost during the 18th and 19th centuries. The eastern half of Sweden, present-day Finland, was lost to Russia in 1809. The last war in which Sweden was directly involved was in 1814, when Sweden by military means forced Norway into a personal union. Since then, Sweden has been at peace, adopting a non-aligned foreign policy in peacetime and neutrality in wartime.

Today, Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy of government and a highly developed economy. In 2010, it ranked fourth in the world in "The Economic Democracy Index and ninth in the United Nations" Human Development Index. Sweden has been a member of the European Union since 1 January 1995 and is a member of the OECD.

History

Etymology

The modern name "Sweden" is derived through back-formation from Old English "Swēoþēod", which meant "people of the Swedes" (Old Norse "Svīþjóð", Latin "Suetidi"). This word is derived from "Sweow/Sweonas" (Old Norse "Sviar", Latin Suiiones). The Swedish name "Sverige" (a conjunction of the words "Svea" and "Rike" – the latter is still spelt with the letter "gi", "rige", in modern Danish) literally means "Kingdom of the Swedes", excluding the Geats in Gotaland.

Variations of the name "Sweden" are used in most languages, with the exception of Danish and Norwegian using "Sverige", Icelandic "Svīþjóð", and the more notable exception of some Finno-Ugric languages where "Ruotsi" (Finnish) and "Rootsi" (Estonian) are used, names commonly considered etymologically related to the English name for Sweden, referring to the people, "Rus", originally from the coastal areas of Roslagen, Uppland.

The etymology of "Sweden", and thus "Sweden", is generally not agreed upon but may derive from Proto-Germanic "Swihaniz" meaning “one’s own”, referring to one’s own Germanic tribe.

Prehistory

Sweden’s prehistory begins in the Allerød warm period c. 12,000 BC with Late Palaeolithic reindeer-hunting camps of the Bromme culture at the edge of the ice in what is now the country’s southernmost province. This period was characterized by small bands of hunter-gatherer-fishers using flint technology.

Sweden enters proto-history with the "Germania" of Tacitus in AD 98. In Germania 44, 45 he mentions the Swedes ("Suiones") as a powerful tribe ("distinguished not merely for their arms and men, but for their powerful fleets") with ships that had a prow in both ends ("longships"). Which kings ("kuningaz") ruled these Suiones is unknown, but Norse mythology presents a long line of legendary and semi-legendary kings going back to the last centuries BC. As for literacy in Sweden itself, the runic script was in use among the south Scandinavian elite by at least the 2nd century AD, but all that has come down to the present from the Roman Period is curt inscriptions on artefacts, mainly of male names, demonstrating that the people of south Scandinavia spoke Proto-Norse at the time, a language ancestral to Swedish and other North Germanic languages.

In the 6th century Jordanes named two tribes he calls the "Suehans" and the "Sueltid" who lived in Scandza. These two names are both considered to refer to the same tribe. The "Suehans", he says, has very fine horses just as the "Thyringi" tribe ("alia vero gens ibi moratur Suehans, quae velud Thyringi equis utuntur eximiis"). Snorri Sturluson wrote that the contemporary Swedish king Adils (Eadgils) had the finest horses of his days. The Suehans were the suppliers of black fox skins for the Roman market. Then Jordanes names the "Suehans" which is considered to be the Latin form of "Sväþjóð". He writes that the Suehids are the tallest of men together with the Dani who were of the same stock. Later he mentions other Scandinavian tribes for being of the same height.

Originating in semi-legendary Scandza, believed to be somewhere in modern Götaland, Sweden, a Gothic population had crossed the Baltic Sea before the 2nd century AD, reaching Scythia at the coast of the Black Sea in modern Ukraine where Goths left their archaeological traces in the Chernyakhov culture. In the 5th and 6th centuries, they became divided as the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths, and established powerful successor-states of the Roman Empire in the Iberian peninsula and Italy Britannica Online Encyclopedia. Crimen Gothic communities appear to have survived intact in Crimea until the late 18th century, Ingerman Nordgren (2004). "", iUniverse. p. 520 ISBN 0595336485

Viking and Middle Ages

The Swedish Viking Age lasted roughly between the 8th and 11th centuries. During this...
period, it is believed that the Swedes expanded from eastern Sweden and incorporated the
Geats to the south. It is believed that Swedish Vikings and Gutar mainly travelled east
and south, going to Finland, the Baltic countries, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine the Black Sea
and further as far as Baghdad. Their routes passed through the Dnieper down south to
Constantinople, on which they did numerous raids. The Byzantine Emperor Theophilos
noticed their great skills in war and invited them to serve as his personal bodyguard,
known as the varangian guard. The Swedish Vikings, called “Rus” are also believed to be
the founding fathers of Kiev Rus. The Arabic traveller “Ibn Fadhlan” described these
Vikings as following: The adventures of these Swedish Vikings are commemorated on
many runestones in Sweden, such as the Greece Runestones and the Varangian
Runestones. There was also considerable participation in expeditions westwards, which
are commemorated on stones such as the England Runestones. The last major Swedish
Viking expedition appears to have been the ill-fated expedition of Ingvar the Fair-Travelled
to Serkland, the region south-east of the Caspian Sea. Its members are commemorated
on the Ingvar Runestones, none of which mentions any survivor. What happened to the
crew is unknown, but it is believed that they died of sickness.

Gamla Uppsala, a site of religious and political importance in the early days of Sweden.

The Kingdom of Sweden

“it is not known” when and how the “kingdom of Sweden” was born, but the list of Swedish
monarchs is drawn from the first kings who ruled both Svealand (Sweden) and Gotaland
(Gothia) as one province with Erik the Victorious. Sweden and Gothia were two separate
nations long before that into antiquity. It is not known how long they existed, “Beowulf”
described semi-legendary Swedish-Gestish wars in the 6th century.

Cultural advances

During the early stages of the Scandinavian Viking Age, Ystad in Scania and Paviken on
Gotland, in present-day Sweden, were flourishing trade centres. Remains of what is
believed to have been a large market have been found in Ystad dating from 600–700 AD.
In Paviken, an important centre of trade in the Baltic region during the 9th and 10th
centuries, remains have been found of a large Viking Age harbour with shipbuilding yards
and handicraft industries. Between 800 and 1000, trade brought an abundance of silver to
Gotland, and according to some scholars, the Gotlanders of this era hoarded more silver
than the rest of the population of Scandinavia combined.Sawyer, Birgit and Peter Sawyer

St. Ansgar is usually credited for introducing Christianity in 829, but the new religion did
not begin to fully replace paganism until the 12th century. During the 11th century,
Christianity became the most prevalent religion, and from 1050 Sweden is counted as a
Christian nation. The period between 1100 and 1400 was characterized by internal power
struggles and competition among the Nordic kingdoms. Swedish kings also began to
expand the Swedish-controlled territory in Finland; conflicts with the Rus who no longer
Finland led to conflicts with Rus”, which were temporarily brought to an end by a peace
treaty in 1323, dividing the Karelian peninsula and the northern areas between the two
countries.”

Feudal institutions in Sweden

Except for the province of Skane, on the southern most tip of Sweden which was under
Danish control during this time, feudalism never developed in Sweden as it did in the rest
of Europe.Franklin D. Scott, “Sweden: The Nation’s History” (University of Minnesota
Press: Minneapolis, 1977) p. 58. Therefore, the peasantry remained largely a class of free
farmers throughout most of Swedish history. Slavery (also called thralldom) was not
common in Sweden, Nordisk familjebok / Uggleupplagan. 30. Tromsålstind – Urakomi
/159–160, 1920. (In Swedish) and what slavery there was tended to be driven out of
existence by the spread of Christianity, the difficulty in obtaining slaves from the lands
east of the Baltic Sea, and by the development of cities before the 16th century.Scott, p.
55. Indeed, both slavery and serfdom were abolished altogether by a decree of King
Magnus Erickson in 1335. Former slaves tended to be absorbed into the peasantry and
some became laborers in the towns. Still, Sweden remained a poor and economically
backward country in which barter was the means of exchange. For instance, the farmers
of the province of Dalslund would transport their butter to the mining districts of Sweden
and exchange it there for iron, which they would then take down to the coast and trade the
iron for fish they needed for food while the iron would be shipped abroad.Scott, pp. 55–56.

Valdemar IV takes control over Swedish Gotland. The final fight outside the walls of Visby
ended with a total massacre of 1,800 Gotlanders.

The Plague in Sweden

In the 14th century, Sweden was struck by the Black Death. The population of Sweden
was decimated.Scott, pp. 56–57. During this period the Swedish cities also began to
acquire greater rights and were strongly influenced by German merchants of the
Hanseatic League, active especially at Visby. In 1319, Sweden and Norway were united
under King Magnus Eriksson, and in 1397 Queen Margaret I of Denmark effected the
personal union of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark through the Kalmar Union. However,
Margaret’s successors, whose role was also centred in Denmark, were unable to control
the Swedish nobility.

Minors and Regents

An unnumber of children inherited the Swedish crown over the course of the kingdom’s
existence, consequently real power was held for long periods by regents (notably those of
the Sture family) chosen by the Swedish parliament. King Christian II of Denmark, who
asserted his claim to Sweden by force of arms, ordered a massacre in 1520 of Swedish
nobles at Stockholm. This came to be known as the “Stockholm blood bath” and stirred
the Swedish nobility to new resistance and, on 6 June (now Sweden’s national holiday) in
1523, they made Gustav Vasa their king.Scott, p. 121. This is sometimes considered as
the foundation of modern Sweden. Shortly afterwards he rejected Catholicism and led
Sweden into the Protestant Reformation. Economically, Gustav Vasa broke the monopoly
of the Hanseatic League over Swedish Baltic Sea trade.Scott, p. 132.

The Hanseatic League had been officially formed at Lübeck on the sea coast of Northern
Germany in 1356. The Hanseatic League sought civil and commercial privileges from the
princes and royalty of the countries and cities along the coasts of the Baltic Sea.Robert S.
Hoyt & Stanley Chodorow, “Europe in the Middle Ages” (Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich,
During the 17th century Sweden emerged as a European great power. Before the emergence of the Swedish Empire, Sweden was a very poor and scarcely populated country on the fringe of European civilization, with no significant power or reputation. Sweden rose to prominence on a continental scale during the tenure of king Gustavus Adolphus, seizing territories from Russia and Poland-Lithuania in multiple conflicts, including the Thirty Years’ War.

During the Thirty Years’ War, Sweden conquered approximately half of the Holy Roman states. Gustavus Adolphus planned to become the new Holy Roman Emperor, ruling over a united Scandinavia and the Holy Roman states, but he died at the Battle of Lützen in 1632. After the Battle of Nördlingen, Sweden’s only significant military defeat of the war, pro-Swedish sentiment among the German states faded. These German provinces excluded themselves from Swedish power one by one, leaving Sweden with only a few northern German territories: Swedish Pomerania, Bremen-Verden and Wismar. The Swedish armies may have destroyed up to 2,000 castles, 18,000 villages and 1,500 towns in Germany, one-third of all German towns.

In the middle of the 17th century Sweden was the third largest country in Europe by land area, only surpassed by Russia and Spain. Sweden reached its largest territorial extent under the rule of Charles X after the treaty of Roskilde in 1658. "A Political and Social History of Modern Europe V.1."/Hayes, Carlton J. H. (1982–1994). "Title: A Political and Social History of Modern Europe V.1."/Hayes

However, Sweden’s largest territorial extent lasted from 1319 to 1343 with Magnus Eriksson ruling all of the traditional lands of Sweden and Norway. The foundation of Sweden’s success during this period is credited to Gustav I’s major changes on the Swedish economy in the 16th century, and his introduction of Protestantism.

"Gustav I Vasa – Britannica Concise" (biography), "Britannica Concise", 2007, webpage: ...

In the 17th century, Sweden was engaged in many wars, for example with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with both sides competing for territories of today’s Baltic states, with the disastrous Battle of Kircholm being one of the highlights. One-third of the Finnish population died in the devastating famine that struck the country in 1696 Source: "U.S. Library of Congress" Famine also hit Sweden.. Hans Högman. killing roughly 10% of Sweden’s population.Elizabeth Ewan, Janay Nugent (2008) “U.S. Library of Congress” Famine also hit Sweden.

The Swedes conducted a series of invasions into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, known as the Deluge. After more than a century of almost constant warfare, the Swedish economy had deteriorated. It became the lifetime task of Charles’ son, Charles XI, to rebuild the economy and refit the army. His legacy to his son, the coming ruler of Sweden Charles XII, was one of the finest arsenals in the world, a large standing army and a great fleet. Sweden’s largest threat at this time, Russia, had a larger army but was far behind in both equipment and training.

Death of Gustav II Adolf at the Battle of Lützen.

After the Battle of Narva in 1700, one of the first battles of the Great Northern War, the Russian army was so severely decimated that Sweden had an open chance to invade Russia. However, Charles did not pursue the Russian army, instead turning against Poland-Lithuania and defeating the Polish king Augustus II and his Saxon allies at the Battle of Kliszow in 1702. This gave Russia time to rebuild and modernize its army.

After the success of invading Poland, Charles decided to make an invasion attempt of Russia which ended in a decisive Russian victory at the Battle of Poltava in 1709. After a long march exposed to cossack raids, Russian Tsar Peter the Great’s scorched-earth techniques and the cold Russian climate, the Swedes stood weakened with a shattered morale and enormously outnumbered against the Russian army at Poltava. The defeat meant the beginning of the end for the Swedish Empire.

The Battle of Poltava in 1709. In the years following Poltava, Russia occupied all the Swedish annexations on the Baltic coast and even Finland. Charles XII attempted to invade Norway 1716; however, he was shot dead at Fredriksten fortress in 1718. The Swedes were not militarily defeated at Fredriksten, but the whole structure and organization of the Norwegian campaign fell apart with the king’s death, and the army withdrew.
Forced to cede large areas of land in the Treaty of Nystad in 1721, Sweden also lost its place as an empire and as the dominant state on the Baltic Sea. With Sweden’s lost influence, Russia emerged as an empire and became one of Europe’s dominant nations. As the war finally ended in 1721, Sweden had lost an estimated 200,000 men, 150,000 of those from the area of present-day Sweden and 50,000 from the Finnish part of Sweden.” (Swedish)

In the 18th century, Sweden did not have enough resources to maintain its territories outside Scandinavia, and most of them were lost, culminating with the 1809 loss of eastern Sweden to Russia which became the highly autonomous Grand Principality of Finland in Imperial Russia.

In interest of reestablishing Swedish dominance in the Baltic Sea, Sweden allied itself against its traditional ally and benefactor, France, in the Napoleonic Wars. Sweden’s role in the Battle of Leipzig gave it the authority to force Denmark-Norway, an ally of France, to cede Norway to the King of Sweden on 14 January 1814 in exchange for northern German provinces, at the Treaty of Kiel. The Norwegian attempts to keep their status as a sovereign state were rejected by the Swedish king, Charles XIII. He launched a military campaign against Norway on 27 July 1814, ending in the Convention of Moss, which forced Norway into a personal union with Sweden under the Swedish crown, which was not dissolved until 1905. The 1814 campaign was the last war in which Sweden participated as a combatant. Swedish troops partake in peace-keeping missions and currently have forces deployed in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

Modern history

Swedish emigrants boarding ship in Gothenburg in 1905. There was a significant population during the 18th and 19th centuries, which the writer Esaias Tegnér in 1833 attributed to “the peace, the (smallpox) vaccine, and the potatoes”. Between 1750 and 1850, the population in Sweden doubled. According to some scholars, mass emigration to America became the only way to prevent famine and rebellion; over 1% of the population emigrated annually during the 1880s. Einhorn, Eric and John Logue (1989). “Modern Welfare States: Politics and Policies in Social” Democratic Scandinavia”, Praeger Publishers, p. 9. “Though Denmark, where industrialization had begun in the 1850s, was reasonably prosperous by the end of the nineteenth century, both Sweden and Norway were terribly poor. Only the safety valve of mass emigration to America prevented famine and rebellion. At the peak of emigration in the 1890s, over 1% of the total population of both countries emigrated annually.”

Nevertheless, Sweden remained poor, retaining a nearly entirely agricultural economy even as Denmark and Western European countries began to industrialize. Koblik, Steven (1975). “Sweden’s Development from Poverty to Affluence 1750–1970”, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 8–9. “In economic and social terms the eighteenth century was more a transitional than a revolutionary period. Sweden was, in light of contemporary Western European standards, a relatively poor but stable country. It has been estimated that 75–80% of the population was involved in agricultural pursuits during the late eighteenth century. One hundred years later, the corresponding figure was still 72%.”

Many looked towards America for a better life during this time. It is believed that between 1850 and 1910 more than one million Swedes moved to the United States. Einhorn, Eric and John Logue (1989), p. 8. In the early 20th century, more Swedes lived in Chicago than in Gothenburg (Sweden’s second largest city). Ulf Beijbom, The House of Emigrants, Växjö, Sweden. Most Swedish immigrants moved to the Midwestern United States, with a large population in Minnesota, with a few others moving to other parts of the United States and Canada.

Despite the slow rate of industrialization into the 19th century, many important changes were taking place in the agrarian economy because of innovations and the large population growth. Koblik, pp. 9–10. These innovations included government-sponsored programs of enclosure, aggressive exploitation of agricultural lands, and the introduction of new crops such as the potato. Because the Swedish peasantry had never been ensnared as elsewhere in Europe, (2007), In” Encyclopædia Britannica”. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Retrieved 19 February 2007. The Swedish farming culture began to take on a critical role in the Swedish political process, which has continued through modern times with modern Agrarian party (now called the Centre Party). Koblik, p. 11: “The agrarian revolution in Sweden is of fundamental importance for Sweden’s modern development. Throughout Swedish history the countryside has taken an unusually important role in comparison with other European states.” Between 1870 and 1914, Sweden began developing the industrialized economy that exists today. Koblik, p. 80. “It is usually suggested that between 1870 and 1914 Sweden emerged from its primarily agrarian economic system into a modern industrial economy.”

Strong grassroots movements sprung up in Sweden during the latter half of the 19th century (trade unions, temperance groups, and independent religious groups), creating a strong foundation of democratic principles. In 1889 The Swedish Social Democratic Party was founded. These movements precipitated Sweden’s migration into a modern parliamentary democracy, achieved by the time of World War I. As the Industrial Revolution progressed during the 20th century, people gradually began moving into cities to work in factories and became involved in socialist unions. A communist revolution was avoided in 1917, following the re-introduction of parliamentarism, and the country was democratized.

World Wars

Swedish soldier during World War II. Sweden remained officially neutral during World War I and World War II, although its neutrality during World War II has been disputed. Koblik, pp. 303–313. Nordstrom, p. 315: “Sweden’s government attempted to maintain at least a semblance of neutrality while it bent to the demands of the prevailing side in the struggle. Although effective in preserving
On 1 July 2010 Sweden stopped routine conscription, switching to an all volunteer force. Conscription was 45,000. By 2003 it was down to 15,000. Sweden also supplied steel and machine parts to Germany throughout the war. However, Sweden supported Norwegian resistance, and in 1943 helped rescue Danish Jews from deportation to concentration camps. Sweden also supported Finland in the Winter War and the Continuation War with volunteers and material.

Toward the end of the war, Sweden began to play a role in humanitarian efforts and many refugees, among them many Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe, were saved partly because of the Swedish involvement in rescue missions at the internment camps and partly because Sweden served as a haven for refugees, primarily from the Nordic countries and the Baltic states. Nevertheless, internal and external critics have argued that Sweden could have done more to resist the Nazi war effort, even if risking occupation. Swedish statements on the issue differ from year to year. A report from the Swedish government in 1945 stated that the country“s sovereignty, this approach generated criticism at home from many who believed the threat to Sweden was less serious than the government claimed, problems with the warring powers, ill feelings among its neighbours, and frequent criticism in the press. In the post-war period, Sweden was under German influence for much of the war, as ties to the rest of the world were cut off through blockades. The Swedish government felt that it was in no position to openly contest Germany, and therefore made some concessions. Sweden also supplied steel and machine parts to Germany throughout the war. However, Sweden supported Norwegian resistance, and in 1943 helped rescue Danish Jews from deportation to concentration camps. Sweden also supported Finland in the Winter War and the Continuation War with volunteers and material.

Following the war, Sweden took advantage of an intact industrial base, social stability and its natural resources to expand its industry to supply the rebuilding of Europe. The Swedish military was to deter attack. The function of the Swedish military was to deter attack. Swedish statements on the issue differ from year to year. A report from the Swedish government in 1945 stated that the country“s sovereignty, this approach generated criticism at home from many who believed the threat to Sweden was less serious than the government claimed, problems with the warring powers, ill feelings among its neighbours, and frequent criticism in the press. In the post-war period, Sweden was under German influence for much of the war, as ties to the rest of the world were cut off through blockades. The Swedish government felt that it was in no position to openly contest Germany, and therefore made some concessions. Sweden also supplied steel and machine parts to Germany throughout the war. However, Sweden supported Norwegian resistance, and in 1943 helped rescue Danish Jews from deportation to concentration camps. Sweden also supported Finland in the Winter War and the Continuation War with volunteers and material.

Post-war era ===Sweden was officially a neutral country and remained outside NATO or Warsaw pact membership during the cold war, but privately Sweden“s leadership had strong ties with the United States and other western governments. Sweden took advantage of an intact industrial base, social stability and its natural resources to expand its industry to supply the rebuilding of Europe. The Swedish military was to deter attack. The function of the Swedish military was to deter attack. Swedish statements on the issue differ from year to year. A report from the Swedish government in 1945 stated that the country“s sovereignty, this approach generated criticism at home from many who believed the threat to Sweden was less serious than the government claimed, problems with the warring powers, ill feelings among its neighbours, and frequent criticism in the press. In the post-war period, Sweden was under German influence for much of the war, as ties to the rest of the world were cut off through blockades. The Swedish government felt that it was in no position to openly contest Germany, and therefore made some concessions. Sweden also supplied steel and machine parts to Germany throughout the war. However, Sweden supported Norwegian resistance, and in 1943 helped rescue Danish Jews from deportation to concentration camps. Sweden also supported Finland in the Winter War and the Continuation War with volunteers and material.

During the early Cold War era, Sweden combined its policy of non-alignment and a low profile in international affairs with a security policy based on strong national defence. As context, according to Edwin Reischauer, "To be neutral you must be ready to be highly militarized, like Switzerland or Sweden." -- "see" Chapin, Emerson. New York Times, September 2, 1990. The function of the Swedish military was to deter attack. Swedish statements on the issue differ from year to year. A report from the Swedish government in 1945 stated that the country“s sovereignty, this approach generated criticism at home from many who believed the threat to Sweden was less serious than the government claimed, problems with the warring powers, ill feelings among its neighbours, and frequent criticism in the press. In the post-war period, Sweden was under German influence for much of the war, as ties to the rest of the world were cut off through blockades. The Swedish government felt that it was in no position to openly contest Germany, and therefore made some concessions. Sweden also supplied steel and machine parts to Germany throughout the war. However, Sweden supported Norwegian resistance, and in 1943 helped rescue Danish Jews from deportation to concentration camps. Sweden also supported Finland in the Winter War and the Continuation War with volunteers and material.

Beginning in the late 1960s, Sweden for a period attempted to play a more significant and independent role in international relations. This involved significant activity in international peace efforts, especially through the United Nations, and in support to the Third World. Since the assassination of Olaf Palme in 1986 and the end of the Cold War, this has been significantly toned down, although Sweden remains comparatively active in peace keeping missions and maintains a generous foreign aid budget.

In 1981 a Soviet Whitey class submarine ran aground close to the Swedish naval base at Karlsholm in the southern part of the country. It has never been clearly established whether the submarine ended up on the shoals through a navigational mistake or if it was a matter of espionage against Swedish military potential. The incident triggered a diplomatic crisis between Sweden and the Soviet Union.

Since 1995 Sweden has been a member of the European Union, and as a consequence of a new world security situation the country“s foreign policy doctrine has been partly modified, with Sweden playing a more active role in European security co-operation.

Military

The JAS 39 Gripen is an advanced Swedish multi-role fighter aircraft of the Swedish Air Force. "Förarmsmakten" (Swedish Armed Forces) is a government agency reporting to the Swedish Ministry of Defence and responsible for the peacetime operation of the armed forces of Sweden. The primary task of the agency is to train and deploy peace support forces abroad, while maintaining the long-term ability to refocus on the defence of Sweden in the event of war. The armed forces are divided into Army, Air Force and Navy. The head of the armed forces is the Supreme Commander ("Överbefälhavaren", ÖB), the most senior officer in the country. Up to 1974 the head of state ("the King") was "pro forma" Commander-in-Chief, but in reality it was clearly understood all through the 20th century that the Monarch would have no "active" role as a military leader.

When King Gustav V asserted his right to decide and bypass the government in military matters just before the First World War ("borggårdskrisen", the Castle Court Crisis) it was seen as a deliberate provocation against established terms of how the country would be ruled. The office of an appointed Supreme Commander was set up in 1939; before that date, from the late 19th century onwards, the leading men of the army and navy would report directly to the cabinet (and the king), and no fully unified command existed in the professional military sphere itself.

The Infantry fighting vehicle Strf 90 produced and used by Sweden. Until the end of the Cold War, nearly all males reaching the age of military service were conscripted. In recent years, the number of conscripted males has shrunk dramatically, while the number of female volunteers has slightly increased. Recruitment has generally shifted towards finding the most motivated recruits, rather than solely those otherwise most fit for service. All soldiers serving abroad must by law be volunteers. In 1975 the total number of conscripts was 45,000. By 2003 it was down to 15,000.

On 1 July 2010 Sweden stopped routine conscription, switching to an all volunteer force.
unless otherwise required for defence readiness. The need to recruit only the soldiers later prepared to volunteer for international service will be emphasized. The total forces gathered would consist of about 60,000 men. This could be compared with the 80s before the fall of the Soviet Union, when Sweden could gather up to 1,000,000 men.

Swedish units have taken part in peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cyprus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Liberia, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Chad. Currently, one of the most important tasks for the Swedish Armed Forces has been to form a Swedish-led EU Battle Group to which Norway, Finland, Ireland and Estonia will also contribute.

The Nordic Battle Group (NBS) had a 10-day deployment readiness during the first half of 2008 and, although Swedish-led, had its Operational Headquarters (OHQ) in Northwood, outside London.

Economy

Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita in thousands of kronor (2004).

Sweden is an export-oriented mixed economy featuring a modern distribution system, excellent internal and external communications, and a skilled labour force. Timber, hydropower and iron ore constitute the resource base of an economy heavily oriented toward foreign trade. Sweden's engineering sector accounts for 50% of output and exports. Telecommunications, the automotive industry and the pharmaceutical industries are also of great importance. Agriculture accounts for 2 percent of GDP and employment.

In terms of structure, the Swedish economy is characterised by a large, knowledge-intensive and export-oriented manufacturing sector, an increasing, but comparatively small, business service sector, and by international standards, a large public service sector. Large organisations both in manufacturing and services dominate the Swedish economy.

The 20 largest (by turnover in 2007) companies registered in Sweden are Volvo, Ericsson, Vattenfall, Skanska, Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications AB, Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget, Electrolux, Volvo Personvagnar, TeliaSonera, Sandvik, Scania, ICA, Hennes & Mauritz, IKEA, Nordea, Preem, Atlas Copco, Securitas, Nordstjernan and SKF. Sweden’s industry is overwhelmingly in private control; unlike some other industrialised Western countries, such as Austria and Italy, publicly owned enterprises have always been of minor importance.


Some 4.5 million residents are working, out of which around a third has tertiary education. GDP per hour worked is the world’s 8th highest at 31 USD in 2006, compared to 22 USD in Spain and 35 USD in United States. GDP per hour worked is growing 2% per cent per year for the economy as a whole and the trade-terms-balanced productivity growth is 2%. According to OECD, deregulation, globalisation, and technology sector growth have been key productivity drivers. Sweden is a world leader in privatised pensions and pension funding problems are relatively small compared to many other Western European countries. by Goran Normann, Ph.D. and Daniel J. Mitchell, Ph.D. June 29, 2000.

Sweden is part of the Schengen Area and the EU single market.

The typical worker receives 40% of his income after the tax wedge. The slowly declining overall taxation, 51.1% of GDP in 2007, is still nearly double of that in the United States or Ireland. The share of employment financed via tax income amounts to a third of Swedish workforce, a substantially higher proportion than in most other countries. Overall, GDP growth has been fast since reforms in the early 1990s, especially in manufacturing OECD Economic Surveys: Sweden – Volume 2005 issue 9 by OECD Publishing

The World Economic Forum 2009–2010 competitiveness index ranks Sweden the 4th most competitive economy in the world. In the World Economic Forum 2010-2011 Global Competitiveness Report, Sweden climbed two positions, and is now ranked 2nd in the world. Sweden is ranked 6th in the IMD Competitiveness Yearbook 2009, scoring high in private sector efficiency. According to the book, "The Flight of the Creative Class", by the U.S. economist, Professor Richard Florida of the University of Toronto, Sweden is ranked as having the best creativity in Europe for business and is predicted to become a talent magnet for the world’s most purposeful workers. The book compiled an index to measure the kind of creativity it claims is most useful to business—talent, technology and tolerance.”. Invest in Sweden Agency, 25 June 2005.

Sweden maintains its own currency, the Swedish krona (SEK), a result of the Swedes having rejected the euro in a referendum. The Swedish Riksbank—founded in 1668 and thus making it the oldest central bank in the world—is currently focusing on price stability with an inflation target of 2%. According to the “Economic Survey of Sweden 2007” by the OECD, the average inflation in Sweden has been one of the lowest among European countries since the mid-1990s, largely because of deregulation and quick utilisation of globalisation.

The largest trade flows are with Germany, the United States, Norway, the United Kingdom, Ireland. The share of employment financed via tax income amounts to a third of Swedish workforce, a substantially higher proportion than in most other countries. Overall, GDP growth has been fast since reforms in the early 1990s, especially in manufacturing.

Energy and Transport

Commuter train in Stockholm.

Sweden's energy market is largely privatized. The Nordic energy market is one of the first liberalized energy markets in Europe and it is traded in Nord Pool and Nord Pool Spot. In 2006, out of a total electricity production of 139 TWh, electricity from hydropower accounted for 61 TWh (44%), and nuclear power delivered 65 TWh (47%). At the same time, the use of biofuels, peat etc. produced 13 TWh (9%) of electricity, while wind power produced 1 TWh (1%). Sweden was a net importer of electricity by a margin of 6 TWh. Biomass is mainly used to produce heat for district heating and central heating and industry processes.

The 1973 oil crisis strengthened Sweden’s commitment to decrease dependence on imported fossil fuels. Since then, electricity has been generated mostly from hydropower and nuclear power. The use of nuclear power has been limited, however. Among other
Science to Statistics Sweden, the unemployment rate in December 2008 was at 6.4%. In the age group 16–64 was 75.0%. The employment tendency was very strong in 2007. The average worker loses 24 days due to sickness. In December 2008, the number employed elected two representatives to the board in all Swedish companies with more than 25 workforce). Spending on transfers is also high.

Eighty percent of the workforce is organised in trade-unions which also have the right to有点。Sweden has a two step progressive tax scale with a municipal income tax of about 30% and an additional high-income state tax of 20–25% when a salary exceeds roughly 320,000 SEK per year. Payroll taxes amount to 32%. In addition, a national VAT of 25% is added to many things bought by private citizens, with the exception of food (12% VAT), transportation, and books (6% VAT). Certain items are subject to additional taxes, e.g. electricity, petrol/diesel and alcoholic beverages. Sweden has a higher level of social spending to GDP than any other nation. Additionally it provides equal as well as comprehensive access to education and health care.

Historically, Sweden provided solid support for free trade (except agriculture) and mostly relatively strong and stable property rights (both private and public), though some economists have pointed out that Sweden promoted industries with tariffs and used publicly subsidised R&D during the country’s early critical years of industrialisation.Kicking Away The Ladder, pp. 39–42, Ha-Joon Chang. After World War II a succession of governments expanded the welfare state by raising the tax level. During this period Sweden’s economic growth was also one of the highest in the industrial world. A series of successive social reforms transformed the country into one of the most equal and developed on earth. The consistent growth of the welfare state led to Swedes achieving unprecedented levels of social mobility and quality of life—to this day Sweden consistently ranks at the top of league tables for health, literacy and Human Development—far ahead of some wealthier countries (for example the United States),. Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett

However, from the 1970s and onwards Sweden's GDP growth fell behind other industrialised countries and the country's per capita ranking fell from the 4th to 14th place in a few decades., Fredrik Bergström & Robert Gidehog. From the mid 90s until today Sweden's economic growth has once again accelerated and has been higher than in most other industrialised countries (including the US) during the last 15 years. Ekonometriska

Sweden began slowing the expansion of the welfare state in the 1980s, or even trimming it back, and according to the OECD and McKinsey, Sweden has recently been relatively quick to adopt neo-liberal policies, such as deregulation, compared to countries such as France., McKinsey IMG institute 2006 The current Swedish government is continuing the trend of moderate rollbacks of previous social reforms., "The Economist" September 13, 2007 Growth has been higher than in many other EU-15 countries.

Sweden adopted neo-liberal agricultural policies in 1990. Since the 1930’s, the agricultural sector had been subject to price controls. In June 1990, the Parliament voted for a new agricultural policy marking a significant shift away from price controls. As a result, food prices fell somewhat. However, the liberalizations soon became moot because EU agricultural policy marking a significant shift away from price controls. As a result, food prices fell somewhat. However, the liberalizations soon became moot because EU agricultural policies supervened. Lindberg, Henrik. “The Role of Economists in Liberalising Swedish Agriculture” (May 2007). Since the late 1960s, Sweden has had the highest tax quota (as percentage of GDP) in the industrialised world, although today the gap has narrowed and Denmark has surpassed Sweden as the most heavily taxed country among developed countries. Sweden has a two step progressive tax scale with a municipal income tax of about 30% and an additional high-income state tax of 20–25% when a salary exceeds roughly 320,000 SEK per year. Payroll taxes amount to 32%. In addition, a national VAT of 25% is added to many things bought by private citizens, with the exception of food (12% VAT), transportation, and books (6% VAT). Certain items are subject to additional taxes, e.g. electricity, petrol/diesel and alcoholic beverages. 

, total tax revenue was 47.8% of GDP, the second highest tax quota among developed countries, down from 49.1% 2006. Sweden’s inverted tax wedge – the amount going to the service worker’s wallet – is approximately 15% compared to 10% in Belgium, 30% in Ireland, and 50% in United States. Public sector spending amounts to 53% of the GDP. State and municipal employees total around a third of the workforce, much more than in most Western countries. Only Denmark has a larger public sector (38% of Danish workforce). Spending on transfers is also high.

Eighty percent of the workforce is organised in trade-unions which also have the right to elect two representatives to the board in all Swedish companies with more than 25 employees. Sweden has a relatively high amount of sick leave per worker in OECD: the average work loses 24 days due to sickness. In December 2008, the number employed in age group 16–64 was 75.0%. The employment tendency was very strong in 2007. The positive trend continued during the first half of 2008, but the rate of slackened. According to Statistics Sweden, the unemployment rate in December 2008 was at 6.4%.
 altogether, the public and the private sector in Sweden allocate nearly four per cent of GDP to research & development (R&D) per year, which makes Sweden one of the countries that invest most in R&D in terms of percentage of GDP. The standard of Swedish research is high and Sweden is a world leader in a number of fields. Sweden tops Europe in comparative statistics both in terms of research investments as a percentage of GDP as well as in the number of published scientific works per capita.

Though a relatively small country, Sweden has long been at the forefront of research and development. For several decades the Swedish government has prioritized scientific and R&D activities. This strong engagement has helped make Sweden a leading country in terms of innovation. For many years, Sweden has been a leading player among OECD countries in terms of its investments in and use of advanced technology. In international comparison, high-technology manufacturing is relatively large in all high-technology segments, and particularly in telecommunications and pharmaceuticals.

Furthermore, Sweden ranked either as the first or second country publishing the highest number of scientific publications in the fields of medical science, natural science and engineering in 2001. Sweden was world-leading in medical science and second only to Switzerland in natural science and engineering in terms of the number of publications per capita.

Technology

Alfred Nobel, inventor of dynamite and institutor of the Nobel Prize.

Alfred Nobel, inventor of dynamite and institutor of the Nobel Prize. In the 18th century Sweden’s scientific revolution took off. Previously, technical progress had mainly come from mainland Europe. In 1739, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences was founded, with people such as Carolus Linnaeus and Anders Celsius as early members. Many of the companies founded by early pioneers are still remain major international brands. Gustaf Dalén founded AGA, and received the Nobel Prize for his sun valve. Alfred Nobel invented dynamite and instituted the Nobel Prizes. Lars Magnus Ericsson started the company bearing his name, Ericsson, still one of the largest telecom companies in the world. Jonas Wenström was an early pioneer in alternating current and is along with Serbian inventor Tesla credited as one of the inventors of the three-phase electrical system.

The traditional engineering industry is still a major source of Swedish inventions, but pharmaceuticals, electronics and other high-tech industries are gaining ground. Tetra Pak was an invention for storing liquid foods, invented by Erik Wallenberg. Losec, an ulcer medicine, was the world’s best-selling drug in the 1990s and was developed by AstraZeneca. More recently Håkan Lans invented the Automatic Identification System, a worldwide standard for shipping and civil aviation navigation. A large portion of the Swedish economy is to this day based on the export of technical inventions, and many large multinational corporations from Sweden have their origins in the ingenuity of Swedish inventors.

Swedish inventors hold a total of 33,523 patents in the United States as of 2007, according to the United States Patent and Trademark Office. As a nation, only ten other countries hold more patents than Sweden.Patents By Country, State, and Year – All Patent Types (December 2007)

Demographics

Stockholm is the capital and largest city in Sweden.


, the largest immigrant groups living in Sweden consists of people born in Finland (175,113), Iraq (109,446), the former Yugoslavia (72,285), Poland (63,822), Iran (57,663), Bosnia and Herzegovina (55,960), Denmark (44,310), Norway (44,310), Chile (28,118), Thailand (25,858), Somalia (25,159) and Lebanon (23,291). In the last decade most immigrants have come from Iraq, Poland, Thailand, Somalia and China. Statistics Sweden. “Utrikes födda efter region, ålder i tioårsklasser och kön. År 2001–2007” Retrieved 7 February 2009.

Immigration from the Nordic countries reached a peak of more than 40,000 per year in 1969–70 when immigration law introduced in 1967 had made it more difficult for immigrants from outside the Nordic region to settle in Sweden for labour market policy reasons. Immigration by refugees and immigrating relatives of refugees from outside the Nordic region drastically during the late 1980s, with many of the immigrants arriving from Asia and the Americas, especially from Iran and Chile.

Map of Sweden showing the largest urban areas, as well as roads, lakes, rivers and mountains.


The population density is only 20.6 people per km² (53.3 per square mile) and is substantially higher in the south than in the north. About 85% of the population live in urban areas. The capital city Stockholm has a population of about 800,000 (with 1.3 million in the urban area and 2 million in the metropolitan area). The second and third largest cities are Gothenburg and Malmö.
During the period between 1820–1930 approximately 1.3 million Swedes, a third of the country’s population, emigrated to North America and most of them to the United States. There are more than 4.4 million Swedish Americans according to a 2006 U.S. Census Bureau estimate. In Canada, the community of Swedish ancestry is 330,000 strong.

**Language**

Distribution of speakers of the Swedish language

The official language of Sweden is Swedish, a North Germanic language, related and very similar to Danish and Norwegian, but differing in pronunciation and orthography. Norwegians have little difficulty understanding Swedish, and Danes can also understand it, with slightly more difficulty than the Norwegians. The dialects spoken in Scania, the southmost part of the country, are influenced by Danish because the region traditionally was a part of Denmark and is nowadays situated closely to it. Sweden Finns are Sweden's largest linguistic minority, comprising about 5% of Sweden’s population, and Finnish is recognized as a minority language.

Along with Finnish, four other minority languages are also recognized: Meänkieli, Sami, Romani and Yiddish. Swedish became Sweden's official language on 1 July 2009, when a new language law was implemented. The issue of whether Swedish should be declared the official language has been raised in the past, and the parliament voted on the matter in 2005—but the proposal narrowly failed., "Sveriges Television", 2005-12-07. Retrieved on July 23, 2006. (in Swedish)

In varying degrees, depending largely on frequency of interaction with English, a majority of Swedes, especially those born after World War II, understand and speak English due to trade links, the popularity of overseas travel, a strong Anglo-American influence and the tradition of subtitles rather than dubbing foreign television shows and films, and the relative similarity of the two languages which makes learning English easier. In a 2005 survey by Eurobarometer 89% of Swedes reported the ability to speak English.http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/doc831_en.pdf

English became a compulsory subject for secondary school students studying natural sciences as early as 1849, and has been a compulsory subject for all Swedish students since the late 1940s. Depending on the local school authorities, English is currently a compulsory subject between first grade and ninth grade, with all students continuing in secondary school studying English for at least another year. Most students also study one and sometimes two additional languages. These include (but are not limited to) German, French and Spanish. Some Danish and Norwegian is at times also taught as part of Swedish courses for native speakers.

**Religion**

Uppsala Cathedral

Before the 11th century, Sweden adhered to Norse paganism, worshiping Æsir gods, with its centre at the Temple in Uppsala. With Christianization in the 11th century, the laws of the country were changed, forbidding worship of other deities into the late 19th century.

After the Protestant Reformation in the 1530s, a change led by Martin Luther's Swedish associate Olaus Petri, the authority of the Roman Catholic Church was abolished. The church and state were separated, allowing Lutheranism to prevail. This process was completed by the Uppsala Synod of 1593. Lutheranism became Sweden’s official religion. During the era following the Reformation, usually known as the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy, small groups of non-Lutherans, especially Calvinist Dutchmen, the Moravian Church and Walloons or French Huguenots from Belgium, played a significant role in trade and industry, and were quietly tolerated as long as they kept a low religious profile. The Sami originally had their own shamanistic religion, but they converted to Lutheranism by the work of Swedish missionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries.

With religious liberalizations in the late 18th century believers of other faiths, including Judaism and Roman Catholicism, were allowed to openly live and work in the country. However, until 1860 it remained illegal for Lutheran Swedes to convert to another religion. The 19th century saw the arrival of various evangelical free churches, and, towards the end of the century, secularism, leading many to distance themselves from Church rituals. Leaving the Church of Sweden became legal with the so-called dissenter law of 1860, but only under the provision of entering another Christian denomination. The right to stand outside any religious denomination was formally established in the Law on Freedom of Religion in 1951. In 2000 the Church of Sweden was separated from the state and Sweden ceased to have any official church.

At the end of 2009, 71.3% of Swedes belonged to the Church of Sweden (Lutheran); this number has been decreasing by about 1% a year for the last two decades., However, only approximately 2% of the church’s members regularly attend Sunday services., Church of Sweden

The reason for the large number of inactive members is partly that until 1996, children automatically became members at birth if at least one of the parents was a member. Since 1996, only children that are christened become members. Some 275,000 Swedes are today members of various free churches (where congregation attendance is much higher), and, in addition, immigration has meant that there are now some 92,000 Roman Catholics and 100,000 Eastern Orthodox Christians living in Sweden.Statistics about free churches and immigration churches from Swedish Wikipedia – in Swedish

Because of immigration, Sweden also has a significant Muslim population. They number about 500,000, but only approximately 5% (25,000) of these actively practice Islam (in the sense of attending Friday prayer and praying five times a day).

Despite a high formal membership rate in the Church of Sweden, several studies have found Sweden to be one of the least religious countries in the world, with one of the highest levels of atheism. According to different studies, between 46% and 85% of Swedes do not believe in God.Zuckerman In the Eurostat survey, 23% of Swedish citizens responded that "they believe there is a God", whereas 53% answered that "they believe there is some sort of spirit or life force" and 23% that "they do not believe there is any sort of spirit, God, or life force".

**Health**

Healthcare in Sweden is similar in quality to other developed nations. Sweden ranks in the
international well-known popular music bands from Sweden, and still ranks among the
2007 years revenue, surpassed only by the US and the UK. ABBA was one of the first
Sweden is the third largest music exporter in the world, with over 800 million dollars in
importance of Swedish folk song in the maintenance of the choral singing tradition and
importance of Swedish folk songs. In fact, out of a population of 9.2 million, it is estimated
Sweden also has a prominent choral music tradition, deriving in part from the cultural
cohabitation ("samarboende") by couples of all ages, including teenagers as well as
elderly couples, is widespread. Recently, Sweden is experiencing a baby boom.

Music
"Midsummer’s Eve" by Anders Zorn.
Sweden has a rich musical tradition, ranging from mediaeval folk ballads to hip hop music.
the Viking musical legacy lives on in some of the old Swedish folk music.

Education
Uppsala University (est. 1477)
Children aged 1–5 years old are guaranteed a place in a public kindergarten (Swedish: "förskola" or, colloquially, "dagis"). Between the ages of 6 and 16, children attend compulsory comprehensive school. In the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Swedish 15-year-old pupils score close to the OECD average. After completing the ninth grade, about 90% of the students continue with a three-year upper secondary school ("gymnasium"), which can lead to both a job qualification or entrance eligibility to university. The school system is largely financed by taxes.
The Swedish government treats public and independent schools equally, The Economist by introducing education vouchers in 1992 as one of the first countries in the world after The Netherlands. Anyone can establish a for-profit school and the municipality must pay new schools the same amount as municipal schools get.

School lunch is free for all students in Sweden, and usually includes one or two different kinds of hot meals, a vegetarian meal, salad bar, fruit, bread, milk and water. Some schools, especially kindergartens and middle schools, even serve breakfast for free to those who want to eat before school starts.

There are a number of different universities and colleges in Sweden, the oldest and largest of which are situated in Uppsala, Lund, Gothenburg and Stockholm. Only a few countries such as Canada, the United States, Japan and South Korea have higher levels of tertiary education degree holders. Along with several other European countries, the government also subsidises tuition of international students pursuing a degree at Swedish institutions, although a recent bill passed in the Swedish parliament will limit this subsidy to students from EEA countries and Switzerland.

Culture
Traditional Swedish rural house, painted in the traditional Swedish Falu red.
Sweden has many authors of worldwide recognition including August Strindberg, Astrid Lindgren, and Nobel Prize winners Selma Lagerlöf and Harry Martinson. In total seven Nobel Prizes in Literature have been awarded to Swedes. The nation’s most well-known artists are painters such as Carl Larsson and Anders Zorn, and the sculptors Tobias Sergel and Carl Milles.

Swedish 20th-century culture is noted by pioneering works in the early days of cinema, with Mauritz Stiller and Victor Sjöström. In the 1920s–1980s, the filmmaker Ingmar Bergman and actors Greta Garbo and Ingrid Bergman became internationally noted people within cinema. More recently, the films of Lukas Moodysson and Lasse Hallström have received international recognition.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Sweden was seen as an international leader in what is now referred to as the “sexual revolution”, with gender equality having particularly been promoted. At the present time, the number of single people is one of the highest in the world. The early Swedish film I Am Curious (Yellow) (1967) reflected a liberal view of sexuality, including scenes of love making that caught international attention, and introduced the concept of the “Swedish sin”.

Sweden has also become very liberal towards homosexuality, as is reflected in the popular acceptance of films such as “Show Me Love”, which is about two young lesbians in the small Swedish town of Ämäl. Since 2009, Sweden repealed its “registered partnership” laws and fully replaced them with gender-neutral marriage.

Sweden also offers domestic partnerships for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. Cohabitation ("samarboende") by couples of all ages, including teenagers as well as elderly couples, is widespread. Recently, Sweden is experiencing a baby boom.

Music
"Midsummer’s Eve" by Anders Zorn.
Sweden has a rich musical tradition, ranging from mediaeval folk ballads to hip hop music. The music of the pre-Christian Norse has been lost to history, although historical re-creations have been attempted based on instruments found in Viking sites. The instruments used were the "lur" (a sort of trumpet), simple string instruments, wooden flutes and drums. It is possible that the Viking musical legacy lives on in some of the old Swedish folk music.

Sweden has a significant folk-music scene, both in the traditional style as well as more modern improvisations which often mix in elements of rock and jazz. Väsen is more of a traditionalist group, using a unique, traditional Swedish instrument called the "nyckelharpa" while Garmarna, Nordman and Hedningarna have more modern elements. There is also Sami music, called the "joik", which is actually a type of chant which is part of the traditional Saami animistic spirituality but has gained recognition in the international world of folk music. Sweden has a major market for new age and ecologically or environmentally aware music, as well a large portion of pop and rock music having liberal and left-wing political messages.

Agnetha Fältskog of Swedish band ABBA performing in 1977.
Sweden also has a prominent choral music tradition, deriving in part from the cultural importance of Swedish folk songs. In fact, out of a population of 9.2 million, it is estimated that five to six hundred thousand people sing in choirs. Durand, Colin (2003). “Choral Conducting: philosophy and practice”, Routledge, pp. 46–47. ISBN 0-415-94356-6. "Sweden has a strong and enviable choral singing tradition. All those interviewed placed great emphasis on the social identification through singing and also referred to the importance of Swedish folk song in the maintenance of the choral singing tradition and national identity."

Sweden is the third largest music exporter in the world, with over 800 million dollars in 2007 years revenue, surpassed only by the US and the UK. ABBA was one of the first internationally well-known popular music bands from Sweden, and still ranks among the
most prominent bands in the world, with about 370 million records sold. With ABBA, Sweden entered into a new era, in which Swedish pop music gained international prominence. There have been many other internationally successful bands since, such as Roxette, Ace of Base, Europe, A-Teens, The Cardigans and The Hives, to name some of the biggest, and recently there has been a surge of Swedish indie pop bands such as Loney, Dear, Shout Out Louds, The Radio Dept. and Dungen, a group which incorporates many elements of Swedish traditional folk music in their sound. One of the biggest bands in Sweden is the rock band Kent.

Sweden has also become known for a large number of heavy metal (mostly death metal and melodic death metal) as well as progressive- and power metal bands. Some of the most popular being In Flames, Amon Amarth, HammerFall, Pain of Salvation, Dark Tranquillity, Opeth, Arch Enemy and Meshuggah. The renowned neoclassical power metal guitarist Yngwie Malmsteen is also from Sweden.

Sweden has a rather lively jazz scene. During the last sixty years or so it has attained a remarkably high artistic standard, stimulated by domestic as well as external influences and experiences. The Centre for Swedish Folk Music and Jazz Research has published an overview of jazz in Sweden by Lars Westin.

Media

Swedes are among the greatest consumers of newspapers in the world, and nearly every town is served by a local paper. The country’s main quality morning papers are Dagens Nyheter (liberal), Göteborgs-Posten (liberal), Svenska Dagbladet (liberal conservative) and Sydsvenska Dagbladet (liberal). The two largest evening tabloids are Aftonbladet (social democratic) and Expressen (liberal). The ad-financed, free international morning paper, Metro International, was originally founded in Stockholm, Sweden. The country’s news is reported in English by, among others, The Local (liberal).

The public broadcasting companies held a monopoly on radio and television for a long time in Sweden. Licence funded radio broadcasts started in 1925. A second radio network was started in 1954 and a third opened 1962 in response to pirate radio stations. Non-profit community radio was allowed in 1979 and in 1993 commercial local radio started.

The licence funded television service was officially launched in 1956. A second channel, TV2, was launched in 1969. These two channels (operated by Sveriges Television since the late 70s) held a monopoly until the 1980s when cable and satellite television became available. The first Swedish language satellite service was TV3 which started broadcasting from London in 1987. It was followed by Kanal 5 in 1989 (then known as Nordic Channel) and TV4 in 1990.

In 1991 the government announced it would begin taking applications from private television companies wishing to broadcast on the terrestrial network. TV4, which had previously been broadcasting via satellite, was granted a permit and began its terrestrial broadcasts in 1992, becoming the first private channel to broadcast television content from within the country.

Around half the population are connected to cable television. Digital terrestrial television in Sweden started in 1999 and the last analogue terrestrial broadcasts were terminated in 2007.

Literature

Writer and playwright August Strindberg.

The first literary text from Sweden is the Rök Runestone, carved during the Viking Age c. 800 AD. With the conversion of the land to Christianity around 1100 AD, Sweden entered the Middle Ages, during which monastic writers preferred to use Latin. Therefore there are only a few texts in the Old Swedish from that period. Swedish literature only flourished when the Swedish language was standardized in the 16th century, a standardization largely due to the full translation of the Bible into Swedish in 1541. This translation is the so-called Gustav Vasa Bible.

With improved education and the freedom brought by secularization, the 17th century saw several notable authors develop the Swedish language further. Some key figures include Georg Stenhammar (17th century), who was the first to write classical poetry in Swedish; Johan Henrik Kellgren (18th century), the first to write fluent Swedish prose; Carl Michael Bellman (late 18th century), the first writer of burlesque ballads; and August Strindberg (late 19th century), a socio-realistic writer and playwright who won worldwide fame. The early 20th century continued to produce notable authors, such as Selma Lagerlöf, (Nobel laureate 1909), Verner von Heidenstam (Nobel laureate 1916) and Pär Lagerkvist (Nobel laureate 1951).

In recent decades, a handful of Swedish writers have established themselves internationally, including the detective novelist Henning Mankell and the writer of spy fiction Jan Guillou. The Swedish writer to have made the most lasting impression on world literature is the children’s book writer Astrid Lindgren, and her books about Pippi Longstocking, Emil, and others. In 2008, the second best-selling fiction author in the world was Stieg Larsson, whose “Millennium” series of crime novels is being published posthumously to critical acclaim., 15 January 2009, www.abebooks.com. Retrieved on 5 September 2009.


Holidays

Walpurgis Night bonfire in Sweden.

Apart from traditional Protestant Christian holidays, Sweden also celebrates some unique holidays, some of a pre-Christian tradition. They include Midsummer celebrating the summer solstice; Walpurgis Night (“Valborgsmässoafton”) on 30 April lighting bonfires; and Labour Day or Mayday on 1 May is dedicated to socialist demonstrations. The day of giver-of-light Saint Lucia, 13 December, is widely acknowledged in elaborate celebrations which betoken its Italian origin and commence the month-long Christmas season.

6 June is the National Day of Sweden and, as of 2005, a public holiday. Furthermore, there are official flag day observances and a Namesdays in Sweden calendar. In August many Swedes have “kräftskivor” (crayfish dinner parties), which incorporate many elements of Swedish traditional folk music in their sound. One of the biggest bands in Sweden is the rock band Kent.

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served. The Sami, one of Sweden’s indigenous minorities, have their holiday on 6 February and Scania celebrate their Scanian Flag day on the third Sunday in July.

Cuisine

Swedish knäckebröd (crisp bread).

Swedish cuisine, like that of the other Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Finland), was traditionally simple. Fish (particularly herring), meat, potatoes and dairy products played prominent roles. Spices were sparse. Famous dishes include Swedish meatballs, traditionally served with gravy, boiled potatoes and lingonberry jam; pancakes, “lutfisk”, and Smörgåsbord, or lavish buffet. “Akvavit” is a popular alcoholic distilled beverage, and the drinking of “snaps” is of cultural importance. The traditional flat and dry crisp bread has developed into several contemporary variants. Regionally important foods are the “surströmming” (a fermented fish) in Northern Sweden and eel in Scania in Southern Sweden.

Cinema

Swedes have been fairly prominent in the film area through the years, several successful Swedish Hollywood actors can be mentioned: Ingrid Bergman, Greta Garbo, Max von Sydow, Dolph Lundgren, Lena Olin, Britt Ekland, Maud Adams, Stellan Skarsgård, Peter Stormare, Izabella Scorupco, Pernilla August, Ann-Margret, Malin Åkerman and Gunnar Björnstrand. Amongst several directors who have made internationally successful films can be mentioned: Ingmar Bergman, Lukas Moodysson and Lasse Hallström.

Fashion

Interest in fashion is big in Sweden and the country is headquartering famous brands like Hennes & Mauritz (operating as H&M), J. Lindeberg (operating as JL), Acne, Gina Tricot, Lindex, Tiger of Sweden, Odd Molly, Cheap Monday, Dr. Denim, Gant, Resteröds, Nudie Jeans, WESC, WAX, Uniforms for the Dedicated, Filippa K, Nakkna and Fifth Avenue Shoe Repair within its borders. These companies, however, are composed largely of buyers who import fashionable goods from throughout Europe and America, continuing the trend of Swedish business toward multinational economic dependency like many of its neighbo

Sports

Stockholm’s Olympiastadion

Sport activities are a national movement with half of the population actively participating, much thanks to the heavy government subsidies of sport associations (“föreningstöd”). The two main spectator sports are football and ice hockey. Second to football, horse sports have the highest number of practitioners, mostly women. Thereafter follow golf, athletics, and the team sports of handball, floorball, basketball and bandy.

Åre ski resort

The Swedish ice hockey team Tre Kronor is regarded as one of the best in the world. The team has won the World Championships eight times, placing them third in the all-time medal count. Tre Kronor also won Olympic gold medals in 1994 and 2006. In 2006, Tre Kronor became the first national hockey team to win both the Olympic and world championships in the same year. The Swedish national football team has seen some success at the World Cup in the past, finishing second when they hosted the tournament in 1958, and third twice, in 1950 and 1994. Ullevi is a stadium in Gothenburg. The stadium is also the largest in Scandinavia. Athletics has enjoyed a surge in popularity due to several successful athletes in recent years, such as Carolina Klüft, Stefan Holm, Christian Olsson, Patrik Sjöberg, Johan Wissman and Kajsa Bergqvist.

Sweden is also the seventh most successful country in the Olympic Games, as of 2010. In schools, on meadows and in parks, the game brännboll, a sport similar to baseball, is commonly played for fun. Other leisure sports are the historical game of kubb, and boules among the older generation.

Sweden hosted the 1912 Summer Olympics and the FIFA World Cup in 1958. Other big sports events held here include 1992 UEFA European Football Championship, FIFA Women’s World Cup 1995, and several championships of ice hockey, curling, athletics, skiing, bandy, figure skating and swimming.

See also

*List of Sweden-related topics

Geographic locale

[|list=]
The text contains a list of translations of the word "Sweden" in various languages.
The Viking Age, which lasted until the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, is known as the period when Vikings were explorers, merchants, warriors, or pirates. Vikings were known for their trade, exploration, raiding, and settlement across Europe, Asia, and islands in the North Atlantic from the late 900s AD to the mid-1200s AD.