

Should you visit Stockholm in winter?



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By Floriane

For this visit to the Swedish capital in winter, for once I went on a **city trip** with some girlfriends. If you're not too afraid of the cold and love snowy landscapes, it's a great idea to explore the Swedish capital in winter.

Dans cet article, nous nous sommes concentrés sur les activités typiquement **hivernales** à faire à Stockholm. Nous vous détaillons également l'équipement, à glisser dans votre valise, pour résister au froid.

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Why come to Stockholm in winter?

- The first advantage, and not the least, is that **airfares** are fairly affordable. I left in January with the low-cost airline Ryanair, and found a flight for around 50 euros.
- The **winter atmosphere**, with cold or snow (if you're lucky) and **winter activities**, will add a truly exotic touch to your stay.

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- Les Suédois sont évidemment habitués aux **hivers très rudes**. En conséquent, de nombreuses activités extérieures sont proposées. Préparez-vous à chausser des patins à glace, à naviguer en bateau pour une [croisière sur l'archipel de Stockholm](#) ou à vous réchauffer dans un **sauna traditionnel**.
- Concernant les **activités intérieures**, vous aurez l'embarras du choix en matière de **musées**. Vous trouverez forcément votre bonheur, entre les musées à thème, pour enfants, et les parcs.

Les Suédois savent mettre en valeur leur patrimoine et rendre attractifs les musées, en proposant des espaces interactifs et souvent adaptés aux enfants. C'est l'une de nos villes préférées pour son offre en musée, où l'on apprend en s'amusant.

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Stockholm in winter temperature

The Swedish capital, located in **south-central Sweden**, experiences long winters. Temperatures and light levels drop drastically in early November.

Temperatures can reach **-20 degrees** in December, January and February, with an annual average of 0°C during the winter months.

Having lived through it, it's impressive that when the pilot announced a temperature of -15 degrees, we almost wanted to stay on the plane to return to France. Finally, with the **right clothing**, it's perfectly possible to enjoy the city to the full (even though I'm a great chiller).

It's also worth noting that the Swedes are completely **accustomed to** these harsh winters, and everything is adapted to get around even in the snow.

A word of warning: be prepared to get **up early** to make the most of the short days, as the sun sets between 3 and 4 pm. We also advise you to plan your visits carefully, as everything closes very early at this time of year.

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What to wear in Stockholm in winter

In our opinion, it's not really bad weather, just **bad clothing**. So if you choose to visit Scandinavia in winter, don't skimp on your equipment to make the most of it.

In December, January and February, we advise you to opt for the famous **onion technique**, which consists of layering **several garments**.

Here's a list of clothes you can pack in your suitcase: a warm under-sweater (heattech or wool), a warm sweater, a fleece, tights, ski pants, booties or waterproof hiking boots, not forgetting gloves, hats and scarves.

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What to see and do in Stockholm in winter

In a previous article, we detailed our 10 must-do things [to do in Stockholm in 3 days](#) in summer.

Some activities, such as visits to the city center and [Stockholm's](#) various [districts](#), can be enjoyed in all seasons.

We've listed below the best things to do in **Stockholm in winter**.

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Stockholm Archipelago in winter

[Visiter l'archipel de Stockholm](#) est un incontournable lors de votre visite de la capitale Suédoise.

Bonne nouvelle, même si certains itinéraires sont gelés, d'autres restent **ouverts tout l'hiver** !

Coup de coeur ♥ nous vous conseillons d'opter pour une croisière organisée avec la compagnie Strömma d'une durée d'1h15 qui vous permettra d'avoir de jolis points de vue depuis l'eau sur Stockholm et de vous enfoncer suffisamment dans son archipel.

Vous pourrez rester sur le pont extérieur, des couvertures sont prévues pour vous réchauffer, ou rester dans la cabine à l'intérieur au chaud.

Your guide will tell you all about the Swedish capital and its beautiful archipelago. Activity possible from mid-December to the end of March.

Plus d'informations sur [les croisières hivernales à Stockholm](#)

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Des sorties en [kayak dans l'archipel](#) sont également organisées l'hiver.

Stockholm Christmas Market

We haven't yet had the chance to be in Stockholm during the **Christmas market** period, which runs from late November to mid-December. We spoke with friends who live there, and from the looks of it, the Christmas markets are magical and the wooden huts are generously decorated with snow (if you're lucky), so the atmosphere is incredible.

If you visit the Swedish capital during this period, here are the two main markets not to be missed.

- The **Christmas market in Stockholm's historic center** (Gamla Stan) takes place on the pretty, colorful Stortorget square, where the [Nobel Museum](#) is located. Some forty exhibitors offer wooden objects, sweets (the Swedes

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love them), ceramics, jewelry and food stalls.

- **Skansen Christmas Market** (Djurgården Island or Stockholm's Museum Island), located in the heart of the **Skansen** open-air museum. We've already mentioned it in our article on the [Skansen museum](#), which is a small concentrate of **Swedish culture**, with many events on offer during the festive season. The site is beautifully decorated, with fir trees on every street corner and old-fashioned Christmas tables set up in the homes.

Stockholm skating rink

Ice skating is one of Sweden's favorite winter activities, especially for Swedish families. The good news is that you can enjoy this activity on one of the downtown skating rinks or on the natural ice of a frozen lake.

- **Ice rink:** a large ice rink is set up every winter in the city center, in the **Kungsträdgården** park in the Norrmalm district (December to February). The rink is free, but skate hire costs around SEK 70 per adult and SEK 30 for

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children for 1 hour.

Even if you don't skate (like me), I'd still recommend a visit to soak up the fairytale atmosphere and warm up with a hot chocolate and/or a cinnamon roll (you need what it takes to withstand the Swedish cold).

We loved watching the kids, who can barely walk on ice skates, doing so much better than us!

- **Natural ice:** Lake **Trekanten** in southwest Stockholm, the closest to the city center, freezes over from late January to late February. When the ice is thick enough, the lake is cleared of snow, forming a skating rink.

However, you'll need skates, as you can't rent them on site. You can still take a stroll around the lake to watch the locals in action.

To make the most of winter activities, [cross-country skiing](#) and [snowshoeing](#) trips are organized from Stockholm.

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Sauna in Stockholm

The sauna (**bastu** in Swedish) is a year-round activity in Sweden. A small room (often a wooden hut) is heated to between **70 and 100 degrees** with very low humidity (around 20%).

After a fifteen-minute session in this "oven", the Swedes jump into a lake or water that is often very cool. For my part, I only did the hot part.

We've noticed two little Swedish idiosyncrasies. They have a very relaxed relationship with **nudity** compared to us. We prefer to warn you, as most Swedes walk around naked in the changing rooms, and only wear a towel when sitting in the sauna. Swedish saunas are usually performed without a bathing suit.

My second point concerns the atmosphere in Swedish saunas, which is very different from the zen-like, quiet atmosphere in French saunas. After talking to the locals, we realized that this is as much a place to **relax** as to **socialize**.

During our first sauna, a family was listening to music on a Bluetooth speaker. The

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Swedes are naturally quiet and unassuming, and make the most of this moment of conviviality. The other thing that disturbed me (Floriane) was the atmosphere and **rustic** feel of some Swedish saunas. Nothing to do with the subdued, cocooning ambience of our own homes.

If you're looking for a **traditional sauna** in beautiful surroundings, we recommend the **Hellasgarden** nature park, south-east of Stockholm, recommended by a friend (of my sister's) who lives in Stockholm. You can reserve your day and time slot [here](#). from 110 SEK per person for two hours, remember to bring your own towel (or rent one at reception).

The sauna is located in **the heart of nature**, next to a lake and easily accessible by public transport, only 20 minutes away by bus (bus 401 leaves Slussen every 15

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minutes), so we can only recommend that you go for it! A final word of advice: get there early on weekends, as it can get crowded. In summer, take a [dip in the lake](#).

There are many beautiful, well-marked **hiking trails** around the lake, a great idea for a day out [around Stockholm](#).

Museums in Stockholm

In Stockholm, you'll be spoilt for choice when it comes to **museums**. We've put together a list of our [favorite museums in Stockholm](#). You're bound to find what you're looking for, with themed museums, children's museums and parks. It's the perfect way to keep warm in winter!

This is one of the things that struck us during our various visits to Stockholm: the

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Swedes really know how to showcase their heritage and make museums attractive, with interactive, welcoming spaces that are often child-friendly. The [Vasa shipwreck museum](#) is a must-see in our opinion. In short, places where you can learn by manipulating and having fun.

In winter, we really recommend the [Go City Pass Stockholm](#), which gives you free access to many museums.

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Visiter Stockholm en bus hop-on hop-off pour rester au chaud

En hiver, découvrir Stockholm tout en restant au chaud est simple grâce aux bus **hop-on hop-off**.

Ces bus touristiques chauffés vous permettent de visiter confortablement les incontournables de la ville comme le **Palais Royal**, **Gamla Stan**, ou encore le **musée Vasa**. Vous pouvez descendre et remonter à votre guise aux différents arrêts, tout en restant à l'abri du froid entre les visites. C'est une excellente option pour explorer Stockholm sans se soucier des températures hivernales.

Plus d'informations sur les [bus hop-on hop-off à Stockholm](#)

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Take a Fika and try the gastronomy

We recommend you try two dishes to warm you up: the **meatballs** (address below) and the **Fika** break (= coffee and gourmet break with friends) often accompanied by its **Kanelbullar** (a brioche rolled in cinnamon), the emblematic pastry of Sweden!

We recommend a stop at the **Östermalm** covered food market to try it all out.

Afin d'en apprendre davantage sur la gastronomie suédoise, vous pouvez réserver une visite guidée de la ville de Stockholm incluant la dégustation de spécialités suédoise.

[En savoir + sur la visite guidée de Stockholm](#)

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Aurora borealis in Stockholm

Even if the chances of seeing the Northern Lights in Stockholm are low, we still recommend downloading the **My Aurora Forecast** application, which gives you forecasts of the appearance of the Northern Lights in different locations.

The best time to see the aurora is from late September to spring. If you'd like to find out more about this phenomenon, which we find incredible, we recommend (as is often the case) [Jamy](#) 's videos from the famous TV show **C'est pas Sorcier**.

For our part, we haven't yet had the chance to see any. It's one of our dreams, and an excellent reason to come back to Scandinavia.

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Where to sleep in Stockholm in winter?

To get the most out of your stay, we recommend the **Norrmalm** and **Östermalm** districts. These districts are located right in the center of Stockholm, so you can easily reach the main points of interest without spending too much time outside, in case of very cold weather.

For smaller budgets, the **Södermalm** district may be a good alternative.

Coup de coeur ♥

[Hotel Birger Jarl](#): **Noormalm** district (the best area to sleep in, in our opinion): the hotel's location is perfect for visiting **central** Stockholm on foot. In a beautiful, completely renovated building, our accommodation was spacious with a mini fridge and carefully decorated, excellent **value for money** where you'll feel right at home. We would definitely go back. (with breakfast)

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[Click here for prices and availability](#)

Renovated apartment

[Biz Apartment Hammarby Sjöstad](#): in the **Södermalm** district (one of our favorites), we hesitated for a long time before choosing this well-located accommodation. It's an apartment, so it's easier to cook than in a hotel. The building has been completely renovated.

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[Click here for prices and availability](#)

Low cost €

[City Backpackers Hostel](#): a nicely decorated hostel, certainly **the best value in** Stockholm, €75 for a double room in the trendy **Södermalm** district (one of our favorites). I stayed there on my first visit to Stockholm (Floriane).

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[Click here for prices and availability](#)

Our good addresses on our map

We've listed all the places and addresses mentioned above on a map to help you find your way around.

We wish you an **excellent trip**! Don't hesitate to leave us a **quick note** or **5 stars** below, to tell us if you're planning this trip, to ask any questions you may have, here or on [Instagram](#), we'll get back to you with great pleasure.

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