

News from Sweden
June 23, 2020
Nyheter från Sverige

From Spring to Fall Swedes engage, weather permitting, in a variety of outdoor activities with passionate zeal. This year has seen a prolonged cooler Spring and, so far, a warm, sunny, beautiful Summer, dampened only by the pandemic spreading worldwide.

Sweden's response to the disease is evolving while trust in the Government is eroding. Covid-19 entered the country in early February brought by skiers returning from Italy. Early on, every significant event was cancelled, e.g., Swedish National Day, The King's birthday, Midsummer celebration, outdoor concerts including the famous Allsång at Skansen and all sports events. A large military hospital was erected in Stockholm. Sequestering has been in place for months. Most deaths have occurred in places caring for the elderly and immigrant populations, the largest concentration of cases located in Stockholm.

Daytime is becoming imperceptibly shorter each day since the summer Solstice (20 June 11:43 pm in Stockholm), an ominous foreboding for Swedes of the pending "cold, dark and dreary" times. Currently the Sun rises at 03:30 and sets at 22:03, twilight linking those events. The Kingdom of Sweden is located at 60.1282° N, 18.6435° E, is slightly larger than California and has 10.23 million inhabitants. We have found the natives open, very friendly, and eager to help, humor a welcome ingredient in every conversation. The newspapers are filled with news items from around the country and no shortage of opinions on every topic. One page is devoted to the EU, Europe, England and a short cryptic article or two on the U.S.

We have been in Upplands Väsby, Sweden for two plus weeks, a small, suburban town located 27 Km northwest of Stockholm. It is a quiet place. Our Condo project is located on a hill overlooking the

town, surrounded by a lush forest: pines, firs, linden, elms, beech, birches, hazelnut, plum, oaks, aspen, mountain ash, cheery, apple and cedars. Flowering bushes abundantly cover the ground: rhododendron, ferns, various berry bushes, gooseberry and lilacs. The magnificent birches outside our balcony are higher than the 4-story building embedded among a variety of pines even taller.

Our physical adjustment has taken some time, sleeping and other time-linked cycles slowly syncing with the local environment and each other. Our amazing neighbors spent the first week acquainting us with the flat and 50-unit complex, town center and several nearby stores the equivalent of Home Depot and other such exciting facilities. The stunningly beautiful walkways and trails through the woods take about 15 minutes to the town center and train station. We can find our way now without using the GPS.

Sweden is a very modern, planned society. The infra-structure is superb. Almost everyone under 75 speaks English, is well-educated and usually speaks one or more other languages. It is now a very diverse population and people seem very happy and content. Swedes recycle everything specifically separating every type of material into respective bins. We are getting into new routines and adjusting habits to meet an unaccustomed environment, so tripping, dropping or running into things has decreased. Our shipped personal goods have now passed through the Panama Canal heading next to Tampa, Florida and then to ports in Europe..

All has moved along rather smoothly. We've managed to complete check-in with the immigration and tax agencies, rent a car and purchased needed household items. The home-owners agency (HSB) has finished enrolling us into the system too complex to explain. Financial and all things dealing with the social system in Sweden are interconnected by complex computer systems. We are often surprised at how well it works. Most everyday actions are

accomplished via a smart phone in this cashless society. Let us know if you liked this first installment of 'retirement in the "old" country'.

You are in our hearts and minds every day,

Carl and Ingrid

[Sweden](#) is a country in [Northern Europe](#) on the [Scandinavian](#) Peninsula. It borders [Norway](#) to the west; [Finland](#) to the northeast; and the [Baltic Sea](#) and [Gulf of Bothnia](#) to the south and east. At 450,295 km² (173,860 sq mi), Sweden is the 55th largest country in the world. It is the fifth largest in Europe and the largest in Northern Europe.

Sweden has a 3,218 km (2,000 mi) long coastline on the eastern side and the [Scandinavian mountain chain](#) (Scanderna) on the western border which separates Sweden from Norway. It has maritime borders with [Denmark](#), [Germany](#), [Poland](#), [Russia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Latvia](#) and [Estonia](#), and it is also linked to [Denmark](#) (southwest) by the [Öresund bridge](#). It has an [Exclusive Economic Zone](#) of 160,885 km² (62,118 sq mi).