

THE SWEDISH PRESCRIPTION

The first country in the world prescribed by doctors





A person wearing a helmet and a backpack is riding a mountain bike on a trail. The scene is set at sunset or sunrise, with a warm, golden light illuminating the landscape. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains with patches of snow or light-colored rock. The overall mood is serene and adventurous.

Visit Sweden will with the use effective communication channels market the whole of Sweden as a destination and contribute to increasing Sweden's attractiveness.

(Assignments according to the articles of association)

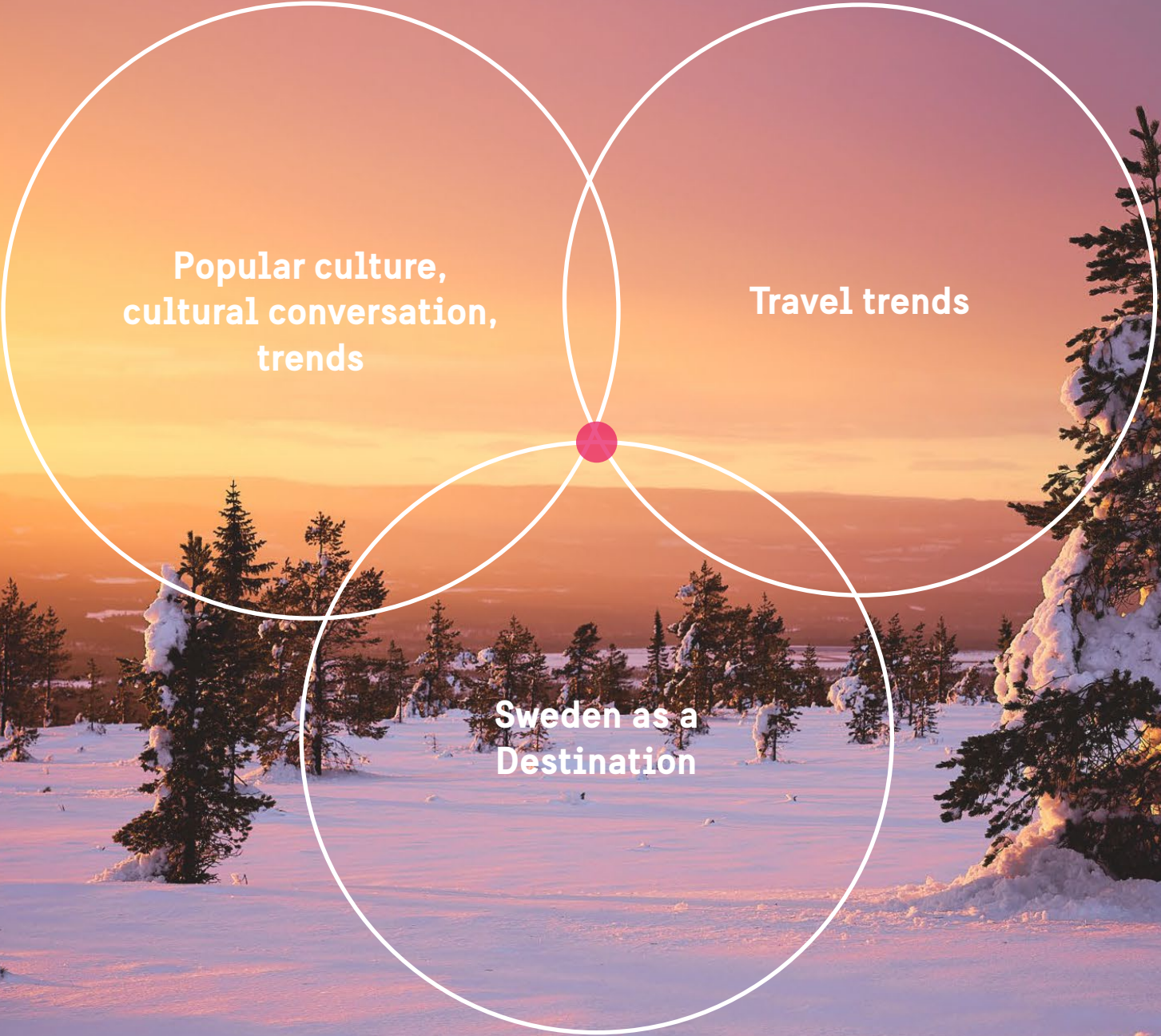
Brand promise:

“We are shaping the new era of purposeful travel”

Communication concept:

“A destination of a different nature”





Popular culture,
cultural conversation,
trends

Travel trends

Sweden as a
Destination

Nature and culture on prescription, an unknown trend

She was depressed, but instead of a pill her doctor prescribed this



In the US and Canada, doctors can prescribe "nature time," including free passes to national parks. Dr. Melissa Lem explains why being outdoors in nature is so important to our health.

Museums as Medicine? The Growing Trend of Art Prescriptions

As the U.S. faces rising rates of stress, loneliness, anxiety and depression, more healthcare workers are prescribing art classes and museum visits instead of pills and procedures.

The Wellness Travel Boom: Where the Opportunities Are

Robin Gilbert-Jones

November 21st, 2024 at 9:44 AM EST

9 reasons travel is good for
your mental health

Wellness tourism

\$651bn

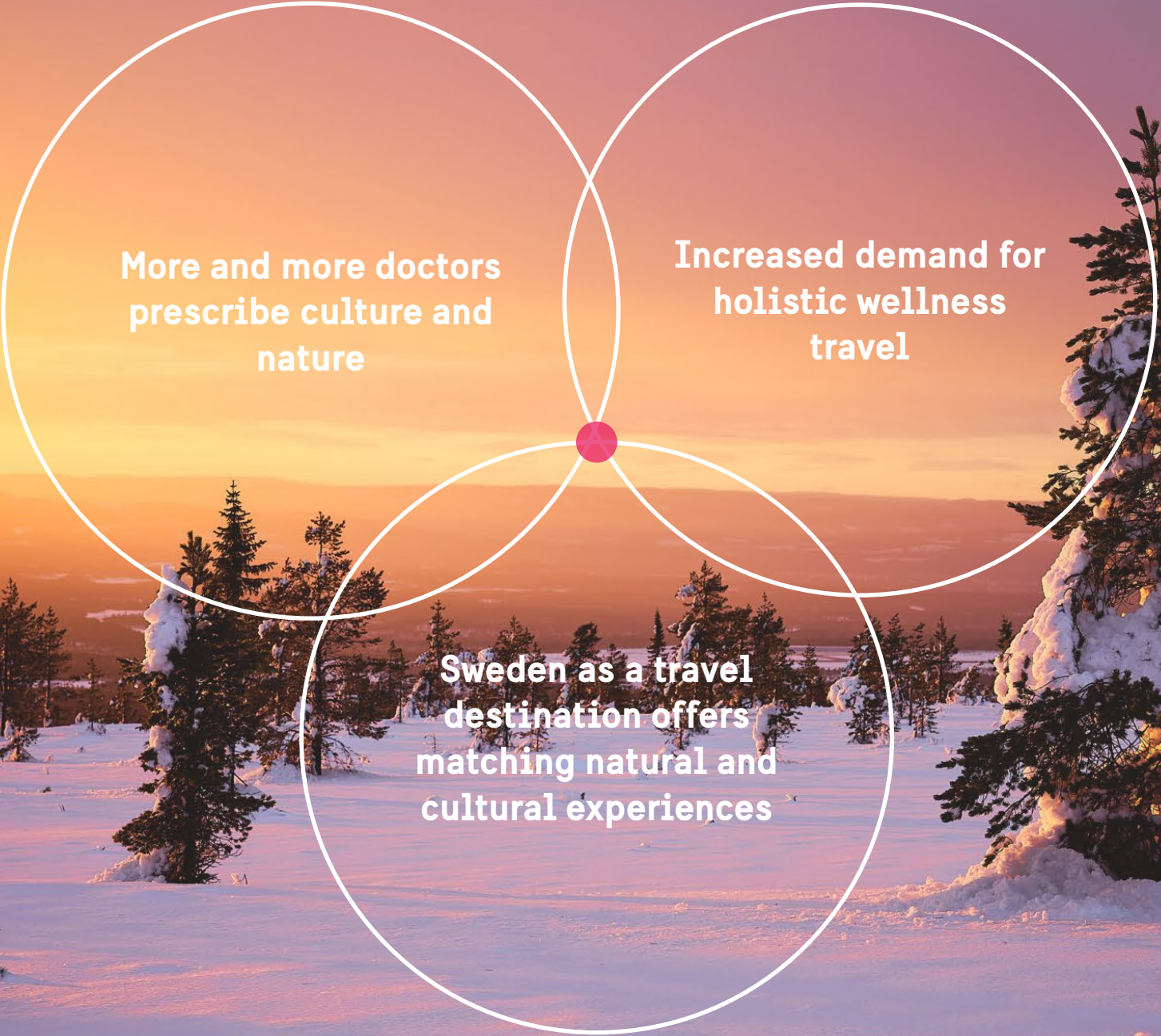
Source: Global Wellness Institute

Sweden has all the conditions to become a health destination

1. Sweden is ranked as one of the best countries to live in from a mental health perspective

2. Sweden is ranked as one of the countries with the best “quality of life”

3. Sweden has unique access to nature and nature has a proven positive effect on health



**More and more doctors
prescribe culture and
nature**

**Increased demand for
holistic wellness
travel**

**Sweden as a travel
destination offers
matching natural and
cultural experiences**

The Swedish Prescription

Welcome to the first country in the world prescribed by doctors.

Across the world, doctors are increasingly prescribing time in nature or cultural activities to support both mental and physical health. Now, Sweden is taking it one step further – becoming the first country to be offered on prescription.

Ranked as a global leader in quality of life* and consistently named one of the happiest countries in the world**, Sweden offers more than just a scenic escape. It has been shown to support measurable health outcomes and a lifestyle centred on balance and belonging.

This document brings together research, inspiration, and practical tools to support those who want to prescribe – or be prescribed – Sweden.

For patients,	For doctors,
Bring this document to your doctor and ask to have a visit to Sweden prescribed. Use it to start a conversation about how Sweden – and the way of life it represents – could support your wellbeing.	Use this document to prescribe a visit to Sweden. Explore the list of health benefits and suggest personalised experiences based on your patient's needs.

The Swedish Prescription is a marketing campaign initiated by Visit Sweden, Sweden's official marketing company for the destination Sweden. The initiative is intended as a supportive tool to promote physical and mental wellbeing, particularly in cases of stress, fatigue, mild anxiety, or other low- to moderate-level symptoms. It is not a substitute for clinical treatment. Healthcare professionals should use their clinical judgement to determine suitability, and patients with acute or severe health conditions should receive appropriate medical care through standard channels.

*Based on Global Citizen Solution's passport index.
**Based on World Population Review's ranking of the happiest countries in the world.

Prescribe activities in Sweden

The activities on this page are intended for healthcare professionals looking to prescribe a visit to Sweden or individuals planning a wellbeing-focused stay. Each activity reflects everyday Swedish habits with proven mental and physical health benefits. The list provides a foundation for creating a personalised programme as part of a Swedish prescription and can be followed in full or adapted to suit individual goals, needs, and length of stay.

Boost your energy – see the country by bike		Recharge in the Swedish forest	
Swedish cities are made for walking and cycling, and with an ever-growing number of quality-assured national cycling trails and signature hiking trails across the country, Sweden is the ideal place for an active recovery. As a visitor, it's an ideal way to explore more of what's around you – at your own pace. Regular exercise like cycling and walking has been shown to support cardiovascular health and reduce feelings of stress.	Doctor's note:	With nearly 70 per cent of the country covered in forests, nature is never far away in Sweden. Spending time in the forest helps ease stress, lower blood pressure and boost focus. Thanks to the Right of Public Access, anyone can enjoy Swedish nature. Join a guided forest bathing tour, try wild swimming or forage for berries and mushrooms. It's a mindful tradition that supports wellbeing, and the berries are deliciously healthy.	Doctor's note:
Get your daily dose of 'fika'		Get a good night's sleep under the stars	
'Fika' is a cherished Swedish habit. It's a moment to enjoy something small to eat and drink. It's a chance to slow down and enjoy your company – without fuss or expectation. It's about taking a real break, even from your phone. Linked to lower stress and better focus, a fika can be enjoyed anywhere. Try a cosy café during your stay or enjoy your fika in nature, as Swedes often do.	Doctor's note:	Sweden serves up all the conditions necessary for restorative sleep. Cool temperatures, clean air and many areas with no light or sound pollution. Add a plethora of unique accommodations in nature, ranging from luxury escapes to off-grid cabins. A few nights in the Swedish outdoors can help reset the body's circadian rhythm and increase your overall wellbeing.	Doctor's note:
Feel uplifted by Swedish culture		Raise your spirits with Swedish music	
Culture on prescription has been a thing in Sweden for over twenty years. It can be consumed everywhere, at one of the many renowned museums, through public outdoor art in both rural and urban settings, or simply by taking the Stockholm subway, which is said to be the world's longest art exhibition. These small encounters can reduce stress and lift your mood.	Doctor's note:	For being a sparsely populated country, Sweden plays a significant role in shaping the global music scene. From inventions like Spotify to super producers like Max Martin and Billboard No. 1 bands like Ghost, music runs deep in Swedish everyday life. Sweden ranks among the world's top mental nations, and studies show that even extreme genres like death metal can reduce anger. Catch a show and feel it for yourself.	Doctor's note:

While these activities are designed to be experienced in Sweden, the habits and mindsets behind them can also be brought home. Lasting health benefits are most likely to emerge when these practices become part of everyday life.

Appendix. Health benefits in Sweden

This section outlines the core health benefits associated with Sweden's natural environment and way of life. It's all supported by scientific research and developed in collaboration with Yvonne Forsell, Senior Professor at Karolinska Institutet. It provides context for why spending time in Sweden can have a measurable impact on mental and physical wellbeing. These insights form the foundation for the practical activities listed on the previous page, which are designed to help guide or personalise a Swedish health prescription.

Silence and tranquillity

In Sweden, silence is part of the landscape – found in forests, by lakes and even within city parks. Over 5,000 protected nature reserves across the country – some in cities – offer a natural counterbalance to the overstimulation of modern life. Sweden is also home to a growing number of silent moments, where individuals can recharge themselves in stillness and nature. These environments promote relaxation and mental clarity, creating spaces for recovery and calm. Listening to natural sounds such as water, birds, and rustling leaves can reduce stress.

(Shukla et al., Environmental Research, 2023)

Reduced exposure to environmental noise supports better sleep, cardiovascular health, and overall wellbeing. (European Environment Agency, 2020)

Swedish nature culture

In Sweden, nature is often found near nature, by lakes, or even floating on the water. You'll find them in summer houses, public bathhouses, and many places to stay, making the experience easy to access. Swedish nature culture is relaxed and social. It's a way to slow down and reconnect, whether with family, friends or simply by yourself. In the north, it also carries deeper roots, used for clearing and quiet reflection. Today, nature is a growing part of wellbeing travel, often paired with dips in cold water.

Spas and hot tubs within the nature experience a stress system, promoting deep rest and better sleep quality. (Hansson & Cohen, Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2018)

Regular nature bathing is associated with a 65 per cent lower risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. (Lachaux et al., Age and Ageing, 2017)

Slowing down with Swedish fika

'Fika', the daily pause for coffee and conversation, is deeply embedded in Swedish culture at home, in cafés, and even at work. These quiet social moments create space to slow down, step away from screens, and be fully present with others.

Reducing screen time has been linked to improvements in mental health, focus and overall wellbeing. (PMAA Review, 2023)

Regular participation in social rituals strengthens belonging and helps protect against emotional distress. (Sheldon et al., Social Science and Medicine, 2018)

Forest bathing

Forest bathing is the practice of slow, mindful immersion in nature. In Sweden, this is more than a trend. It fits naturally into the landscape and the way people spend time outdoors. With nearly 70 per cent of the country covered in forest, you'll find spaces and stillness in every direction. From quiet trails just outside the cities to guided forest bathing experiences deep among the trees, it's easy to find a place where you can slow down, listen, and simply be.

Forest bathing significantly reduces cortisol levels, indicating a stress reduction. (Antonelli et al., International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2020)

Nature contact appears to promote health through stress recovery and attention restoration. (Kim, Frontiers in Psychology, 2015)

Restorative sleep

Sweden's natural environment offers ideal conditions for restorative sleep. Even for infants, the tradition of outdoor sleeping reflects a cultural belief in nature as a foundation for rest. Visitors can experience this too. From remote cabins to quiet lakesides, Sweden makes it easy to lay well and ease. With Sweden's clean air and cool night temperatures, there's no need for artificial cooling – just open windows before going to sleep.

The ideal room temperature for sleep is around 18 degrees Celsius, promoting deep and more restorative rest. (Sleep Foundation, 2015)

Spending time away from artificial light and aligning with natural light-dark cycles can help reset the body's circadian rhythm. (Wright et al., Current Biology, 2013)

Light and dark

In the far north of Sweden, daylight stretches through the night in summer, providing natural exposure to blue-enriched light that resets the spectrum used in circadian light treatments. This seasonal daylight can help reset the body's circadian rhythm, improve sleep patterns, and supporting mood regulation. In winter, the darkness reveals something just as powerful, supporting the Northern Lights after a series of new and emotional nights.

Prolonged exposure to natural light helps regulate circadian rhythms and improve sleep quality. (Wright et al., Current Biology, 2013)

Chlorophyll is associated with low levels of fatigue of vascular endothelial cells, which correlates with emotional wellbeing. (Thorgeirsson & Halvorsen, Scientific Reports, 2024)

Accessible nature

In Sweden, nature isn't something you have to plan for – it's all around you. Forests, lakes, and parks are often within walking distance or a short drive away, making it easy to enjoy nature and avoid the challenges to Sweden's Right of Public Access (Allemansrätten), you're free to hike, camp, and enjoy most natural areas, provided you treat nature and wildlife with care. This openness and practical nature support both physical and mental wellbeing.

Urban green spaces are linked to relaxation, reduced stress and improved mental wellbeing. (World Health Organization, 2021)

Spending 75 hours immersed in nature has been shown to significantly reduce stress levels and improve overall mood. (75 Hour Cabin study, Karolinska Institutet & Visit Sweden, 2017)

Culture without the crowd

Sweden's cultural institutions are easy to access, ranging from world-renowned modern museums to family-friendly historic centres. Unlike many European destinations, they usually offer lots of space, allowing for a quieter, more personal experience. Engaging with art has been shown to support mental health.

Cultural engagement is linked to reduced depression, anxiety, and loneliness, as well as improved quality of life. (Fennell et al., World Health Organization, 2017)

Art as a prescription programme has been shown to improve wellbeing, especially in people with low to moderate mental health needs. (Dimes et al., Frontiers in Public Health, 2019)

Clean air

Sweden consistently ranks among the top countries in Europe for air quality. With low pollution levels even in cities and vast stretches of forests in countryside, the air here supports more than just respiratory health. Clean air has been linked to better cognitive function, improved sleep, and greater overall wellbeing.

Sweden remains one of Europe's top performers in air quality, with proven public health benefits. (European Environment Agency, 2020)

Clean air supports respiratory health, mental clarity and lower overall mortality risk. (World Health Organization, 2021)

Active travel made easy

In Sweden, people walk and cycle as part of daily life, not necessarily to exercise, but to get around. A well-connected network of walking trails and cycling routes makes active travel easy, whether in cities, towns, or the countryside. Sweden is also recognised as one of the most bicycle-friendly countries in the world, with the Göta Canal recently named the best cycling trail in Europe.

Physical activity during travel improves wellbeing and supports long-term health. (Psychology & Health, 2011)

Regular walking and cycling are associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers, as well as improve mental health and overall wellbeing. (Public Health England, 2018)

Sweden's foraging culture

In Sweden, foraging for wild berries and mushrooms is a national pastime. Every summer and autumn, people head into forests to find treasures like blueberries, lingonberries, and chestnut leaves – all naturally abundant thanks to the Right of Public Access (Allemansrätten), which allows anyone to roam and forage freely (not with weapons for nature and wildlife). These forest foods are rich in antioxidants and nutrients linked to heart health, immune function, and mental well-being.

Foraging contributes to human wellbeing through stress reduction, connection to nature and mental restoration. (Riedl et al., Forests, 2024)

Blueberries and lingonberries contain polyphenols with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects that support heart health and immune function. (JHE Research Institute of Sweden, 2016)

Life by water

Sweden is home to some 100,000 lakes, meaning water is never far away – whether you're in a city forest or on a lake. This closeness to nature's so-called 'blue spaces' offers more than scenic beauty: from lakeside walks and cold dips to kayaking and quiet reflection, water is a central part of many Swedes' daily lives and contributes to better mental health and being. Being near water is linked to lower levels of psychological distress and improved overall mental health. (Wissler et al., Health & Place, 2012)

Regular exposure to blue spaces promotes physical activity and reduces stress-related illness. (Garcen et al., International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health, 2017)

Wellbeing through music

Sweden has long pursued both its wealth in music. With globally influential producers and pop artists as well as a world-renowned metal scene, music is woven into the country's cultural fabric. There's a music scene for everyone, from city festivals to countryside folk festivals, and everything from rock to acoustic folk. With music playing a role in mental health per million residents, Sweden ranks among the top countries globally for mental health per capita.

Attending live music events has been associated with increased feelings of well-being and life satisfaction. (Kendall et al., Therapeutic & Social Psychology Bulletin, 2014)

Listening to extreme music genres such as metal can enhance positive emotions and regulate anger. (Sharma & Singh, Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 2015)

Legen: The Swedish art of balance

Legen – the idea of 'not too much, not too little' – is central to how Swedes approach life. This concept of balance encourages moderation in consumption, relationships, and lifestyle. It's reflected in everything from interior design to daily routines. Studies show that cultures embracing balance and sustainable rhythms report lower stress levels and higher life satisfaction.

A lifestyle based on moderation and balance is associated with better emotional regulation and reduced risk of burnout. (American Psychological Association, 2022)

Cultivating contentment involves shifting focus from external achievements to internal fulfilment, leading to a more sustainable sense of wellbeing. (Gordon & Journal of Happiness studies, 2020)



SWEDISH SAUNA: PAIN RELIEF

KUNUTSOR & LAUKKANEN,
TEMPERATURE, 2023



ARTS & CULTURE: BOOST MENTAL HEALTH

FANCOURT AND FINN,
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION,
2019



BEING IN NATURE: REDUCE STRESS

STOBBE ET AL.,
ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH,
2023



MIDNIGHT SUN: 24/7 LIGHT THERAPY

WRIGHT ET AL.,
CURRENT BIOLOGY,
2013

Meet the doctors who support The Swedish Prescription



Dr. Stacy Beller Stryer

Board-certified paediatrician doing public health work both for the federal government and associate medical director for parkrxamerica.org (PRA) aka natureprescribed.org. Based in the US.



Dr. Sam Everington

Vice President of the British Medical Association. Received a knighthood for services to primary care. Based in the UK.



Dr. Maaïke ten Thije-de Boer

Specialist in Physical and Rehabilitation medicine. Advocate for the lifestyle prescription movement. Based in the Netherlands.



PD Dr. Michael Jeitler

Researcher in Green Space Interventions. Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Bosch Health Campus Stuttgart in Germany.

[Get your Swedish prescription ↴](#)

“Spending time in nature and engaging with culture are evidence-based ways to support both mental and physical health. Sweden offers an ideal setting for this kind of care.”

Dr. Sam Everington

MacBook Pro

<https://visitsweden.com/the-swedish-prescription/>

Visit Sweden

+1800 news articles
in 70 plus
countries

+8100 Downloaded
prescriptions

4.13 billion
total reach

+227 % increase in
interest in Sweden
as a destination*

*WPP MEDIA BRAND LIFT ATV DE



Sweden Aims To Become A Medically Prescribed Wellness Destination

With over 69% forest coverage and 100,000 lakes, Sweden is positioning itself as a premiere destination for doctor-prescribed outdoor wellness retreats.

By [Kaitlyn McInnis](#), Contributor. © I cover luxury travel—from takeoff to touch...

Published Sep 24, 2025, 07:29am EDT. Updated Sep 24, 2025, 09:57am EDT

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Archipelago on the Baltic Sea coast in Sweden. GETTY

When you think of Sweden, what comes to mind? For many of us, it's afternoon fika dates, perhaps IKEA meatballs, and likely the fact that the country always ranks in the top five happiest countries in the world.



Latest Europe World EU Policy

One of Europe's 'happiest' countries is calling itself 'the first country in the world that doctors can prescribe'



Tourists told to visit iconic destination



Sweden is calling itself 'the first country in the world that doctors can prescribe'



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Originalljud



worldeconomicforum 18 tim
#Sweden has teamed up with doctors for a new ad campaign about the health benefits of a visit, billing itself as 'the first country in the world that doctors can prescribe'. The claims have some grounding in fact, as scientific studies confirm the advantages offered by Swedish habits such as cold plunges, foraging and 'forest bathing'.

Across the tourism sector, people are spending more of their vacation doing things, rather than just looking at them. By 2030, the majority of tourists globally will be millennials or Gen Z, and two thirds of 18 to 35-year-olds say they find spending money on experiences more fulfilling than buying an item of the same value.

The World Economic Forum's Beyond Tourism initiative aims to foster more

1,6 tn 17

för 18 timmar sedan

Logga in för att gilla eller kommentera.

Sweden: The country 'prescribed' by doctors



(Image credit: Martin Edström)



erström 4th October 2025

An ad campaign claims that visiting the Nordic embracing Swedish culture can improve your and it's turning to medical experts to make its

style :

Destinations

Country To Be Prescribed By Doctors...

Happiest Country

Prostate Health

Karwa Chauth Mehndi Designs

Clk < >

Best country to be prescribed by 'prescription'

Share Print AA

re, 'The Swedish Prescription,' encouraging doctors to recommend visits to the country for patient wellbeing. This evidence-based campaign promotes nature, lifestyle, and cultural activities like forest walks and fika as stress relief and mental health support, aiming to normalize n... [Read More](#)

tego kraju ma działać jak terapia

A scenic photograph of two kayakers on a calm lake at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water and the surrounding rocky landscape. Two kayakers in blue gear are visible on the water, one slightly ahead of the other. The water reflects the sunset colors, and the rocky islands in the background are silhouetted against the bright sky.

Ευχαριστώ, Thanks, Tack!

Nils Persson

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Visit Sweden