



PHOTO: ROSANNA ANDERSSON

Winter in Stockholm

Planning to visit Stockholm this winter? Some people will probably think you're crazy, but then again, you're not like most people! Fortunately for those brave enough, Stockholm has a lot to offer no matter the season. From centuries-old traditions, to cozy candlelit cafés and a wide range of activities for any age – a bit of snow has never stopped Stockholm from having a good time.

Traditions of light

As the city gradually becomes darker, cooler and blanketed in fresh snow – something magical begins to happen. Streets are draped in bright strings of light, while windows start to warmly glow with Advent candles and lanterns, as the city transforms into a cozy winter wonderland. Though these lights aren't only for looks, as they also mark the eagerly awaited countdown to Christmas.

Aside from Advent, there are many traditions practiced by Swedes to keep darkness at bay, though none are quite as famous as Lucia Day. Early in the morning on December 13th, Lucia and her maidens begin their procession of light. Wearing a crown of candles, Lucias all over the country sing carols and serve saffron-flavored buns (lussekatter), sweet mulled wine (glögg) and gingerbread biscuits (pepparkakor) to all those in need of a bit of light. But don't worry if you happen to miss the procession – you can still find these treats all winter long.

Walk then wander

Consider starting the day wandering through the cobblestoned alleys of **Gamla Stan**, Stockholm's well preserved old town. In winter this district feels like something from a storybook, serving as home to a Stockholm's most famous Christmas market, an array of cultural landmarks and many quaint cafés. But keep your eyes peeled – some of the best places to stop for a fika are down in cozy candle-lit cellars.

Another option is visiting one of Stockholm's most popular areas, **Royal Djurgården**. The island collects many of Stockholm's must-see attractions in one place and all within walking distance from each other. The greenhouse at **Rosendals Trädgård** and **Skansen**, the world's oldest open-air museum, are particularly beautiful when decorated for the season.

Believe it or not, one of the city's not-to-be-missed exhibitions is right under your nose in **Stockholm's subway** (tunnelbanan) stations. Said to be the world's longest art exhibit, travelling through them is a

journey in itself – spanning generations, mediums and styles. Check out our extensive guide at: visitstockholm.com/art-in-the-subway.

Catch a glimpse

One of the best ways to get a view of Stockholm is by boat. Head to the port at Strömkajen and take the Stockholm Winter Tour. This 75-minute boat tour will take you along the coast of Djurgården and around the islands of **Fjäderholmarna**. If you're lucky there will be plenty of ice on the water for the ship to break through. Boat times available on stromma.se.

The cold isn't all bad! Without it, Swedes wouldn't be able to play some of their favorite ice sports – hockey and bandy. While most visitors are familiar with hockey, bandy has been described as football (soccer) on the ice. See the difference for yourself, find a match at hammarbybandy.se or hockey at aikhockey.se.

Dress warm

Only 15 minutes away from Slussen station stands **Hellasgården**, a popular recreational area at one of Sweden's finest nature reserves. Here visitors can ski, skate, and take part in the Swedish winter tradition of alternating between sauna and ice baths. Don't want to get wet? Take a stroll around the reserve and heat up with some soup at restaurant Storstugan. Plan your trip at hellasgarden.se.

Still want to skate, but not looking to leave the big city? Gliding around the ice rink at **Kungstädgården** is a must for many winter visitors to Stockholm. More details at visitstockholm.com/ice-skating.

If the weather is particularly uncooperative, check out some distinctly Swedish brands like Stutterheim or Whyred, and the curated selection at shops like Grandpa. Don't miss Scandinavian interior design in stores like Designmarknad Sthlm or Nordiska Kompaniet either. With luck – you may even make it in time for the Christmas sales.

Find out more at visitstockholm.com.