



PHOTO: VIKTOR GÅRDSÅTER

## The Stockholm Way

Built across a dynamic archipelago and offering nothing short of eight centuries of history and culture to choose from, Stockholm is widely regarded as one of the world's most beautiful cities. Today, Stockholm also enjoys a world class reputation as a hub of design, technology and creativity in all forms. Shaped by ever-growing diversity, a culture celebrating innovation and natural beauty worth fighting for. These factors have come together to make Stockholm not only one of the world's most liveable cities, but now the fastest growing capital in Europe.

### Where people come first

Imagine a 40-hour work week, five weeks of vacation annually, or 480 days of parental leave. Now imagine that these are not just benefits, because in Stockholm – they are rights. These rights were established to secure quality of life, and stand as the direct result of decades of a fiercely democratic government with an egalitarian welfare model.

From this approach, the idea of people being equal has come to take many forms. Flatter hierarchies, more horizontal leadership, gender equality, and ethnic diversity, to name a few. Though the championing of these causes is far from over, Stockholm is still actively taking steps to make the city more inclusive. For instance, the vision for Stockholm 2030 is that of a capital accessible to everyone – disabled or otherwise. Since its launch in 1999, the Easy Access Project has made streets, squares and cultural institutions more accessible with each coming year. While Stockholm has a long history of advocating for equality, it comes with the understanding that the city must become better integrated to perform well into the future.

In addition to the high standard of equality, Stockholm enjoys a high quality of life due to an unwavering focus on safety, cleanliness, security and culture. Residents enjoy access to a wide range of restaurants, theatres, sporting events, and many other activities catering to the variety of tastes found in a multicultural city. Aside from guaranteeing residents the time to prioritize their lives, an active life available outside of work is an essential part of a great city.

### Innovation in all forms

One could say that innovation in Stockholm started off with a bang. From the time Alfred Nobel invented dynamite in the 19th century, technology has become an essential part of the Stockholm's DNA and the spirit of innovation in the city has only grown. This is in part because both Stockholm and Sweden in general have been paying attention to development, carefully passing legislation and taking on civic projects that helped create a nation of digital natives. A reported 91% of Swedes use the internet at least once a week,

making Sweden the second most internet-connected country in the world. This has helped to establish an attractive environment for the development of a strong start-up culture.

Between an open metropolitan network comprised of 1,200,000 km of fibre optic cable, and Sweden's efforts to ensure the country's internet connection is amongst the world's fastest – local Stockholm based start-ups have grown to become top contenders within the global start-up scene. Skype, Spotify, Mojang, King and Klarna are just a few Swedish start-ups that have come to shape the modern world. Though it was more than just a good connection that got these start-ups off the ground. For one thing, Stockholm's Royal institute for Technology, founded in 1827, accounts for over one-third of Sweden's technological research and engineering education capacity, helping to keep the city an international business and technology hub. In addition, it's relatively safe to start a company in Stockholm, as Sweden could be considered a particularly risk-friendly nation. This is mostly a result of the country's solid safety net for employees from an income perspective, which has resulted in applicants becoming less wary of working for start-ups, which in turn has ushered in a new wave of tech innovation.

Though risk and innovation in Stockholm is not just limited to the field of tech, as music is one of Stockholm's leading exports. Present-day acts like Avicii, Icona Pop, Robyn, Zara Larsson, Lykke Li or Cherrie are topping charts and heading up a new age of innovative sound. Though this is nothing new, as Stockholm-based producers like Denniz Pop or Max Martin, with a not-too-shabby 21 Billboard number-one hits to his name, have topped the charts for decades. Because of the Swedish tradition of celebrating and supporting innovation in all forms, it shouldn't be a total surprise that the same city that gave the world ABBA also gave us Spotify. Today, the city continues to attract music talents from all over the world seeking inspiration, or to create and record music – this isn't too surprising either, as the Stockholm way of life is likely music to their ears.

For more innovative sound, check out our Stockholm Spotify playlist: [play.spotify.com/user/visitstockholm](https://open.spotify.com/user/visitstockholm). Plug in, listen and get inspired!

## Blue and yellow makes green

Despite being Europe's fastest growing capital, Stockholm is also easily one of the continent's greenest. A core element of Stockholm's green approach stems from a long-standing respect for the nature seen throughout the city. Due to the geographical obstacles faced in developing a city across 14 islands, nature has always played a role in shaping the planning and administration of Stockholm. Then considering the Swedish approach to democracy, transparency and sustainability in development – it's clear why Stockholm was the first designated European Green Capital by the EU Commission in 2010. The primary reason being Stockholm's integrated administrative system, which guarantees environmental aspects are considered in matters like budgets, operational planning, reporting, and monitoring as well. Simply put, nearly every decision taken by Stockholm is with sustainability in mind.

While one could imagine sustainability on a citywide level would be nearly imperceptible – in Stockholm, residents feel it. From the quality of the air, to one of the most extensive and environmentally friendly public transit systems in Europe, it's clear Stockholm just wouldn't be Stockholm without a focus on sustainability. This was indicative in the 2017 Arcadis Sustainable Cities Index when Stockholm, ranked on three dimensions of sustainability: people, planet, and profit, was placed No. 2 in the world. The index highlighted the social, environmental, and economic stability found in the city – painting a picture of the health and wealth of Stockholm now and into the future. Although it's always nice to receive outside recognition, the best testimony often comes from the residents themselves. Whether or not you believe Stockholm is one of the best cities to live and work, we suggest you visit and experience the Stockholm way of life for yourself.