



Nordic Coastal Voyage: Norway, Finland & the Arctic Circle

EXTEND YOUR TRIP

Stockholm, Sweden

Copenhagen, Denmark

Your Travel Handbook



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TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this vacation.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 3 blank passport pages.
- **Optional pre-trip extension to Stockholm, Sweden:** No additional pages needed.
- **Optional post-trip extension to Copenhagen, Denmark:** No additional pages needed.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** You will need a total of 3 pages.

No Visas Required

Travelers with a U.S. passport do not need any visas for this vacation, including the optional trip extensions.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Traveling with a minor may require certain documentation for border crossings. For further detail on the required documentation, please contact the local embassy or state government.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

Please review the information below prior to departing on this trip. We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience.

GROUP SIZE

- A maximum of 42 travelers, led by a local Grand Circle Program Director

PACING

- 15 days, with 4 hotel stays and a 5-night cruise
- 1 internal flight of 1.5 hours

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 2-3 continuous miles unassisted and participate in 2 hours of physical activities daily, including stairs
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, or crutches
- Travelers using other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them
- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones
- Travel by 45-seat coach and train

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 35-80°F during cruising season
- June-August are the warmest months
- May and September weather can be unpredictable and change quickly

Health Check

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential to fully enjoy your trip. If you have ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date.

- Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. (You can use the “Keep Your Abilities in Mind” on the previous page as a guideline to discuss with him or her.)
- You may want to have a dental exam before your trip. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling.
- If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition.

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: travel.state.gov (Select “Find International Travel Information” then select “Country Information”; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Your Health Abroad” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying

- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Traveler Support team at **1-800-321-2835**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Water in Scandinavia is considered safe, but as an added safety precaution against possible stomach upsets, we recommend you drink bottled water as much as possible.
- Never drink from a mountain stream, fjord, or river, regardless of how clean it might appear.
- Bottled water is usually for sale in hotels, food shops, and restaurants.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency instead.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

Denmark: Danish *kroner* (Kr., DKK)

Sweden: Swedish Krona (kr., SEK)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1–\$5 each time you use an out-of-network ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

Scandinavia: ATMs are widely available throughout Scandinavia and should not be hard to find, especially in larger cities.

Credit & Debit Cards

Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although the Discover card is accepted in some countries outside the U.S., it is not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

Scandinavia: Credit and debit cards are readily accepted in Scandinavia. Some cafes, restaurants, and attractions will only accept credit cards. Visa is the most widely accepted credit card in Scandinavia, followed by MasterCard and then American Express.

Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards, or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

On Board Ship

Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Cruise Card:** Upon embarkation, you will receive a Cruise Card with which to purchase food, drink, and land excursions (offered directly by the Havila ship) not included in your tour. Upon receipt of the Cruise Card, you will swipe your credit card so that your purchases can be charged to it. The Cruise Card can then be used for payments against your room. The day before disembarkation in Kirkenes, you will receive a bill for your purchases, which will be charged to your credit card directly by the Havila ship.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the cruise and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is paid with your ship guide (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. To make it easy for you to budget, we have quoted the amounts in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars.

- **GCT Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your GCT Program Director at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$6–\$8 per traveler for each day their Program Director is with them. *Please note that tips for your Program Director can only be in the form of cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Program Director during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard:** Gratuities to the shipboard personnel are not included in the cost of your voyage. If you wish to acknowledge those who have worked to make your time on board enjoyable, a gratuity of \$3–\$4 per person, per night, is customary. On some steamers, tips to dining and cabin staff are pooled. In this case, you can pay one gratuity (based on the above rate) in kroner, which you’ll leave in an envelope with a staff member before disembarking. It is also acceptable for shipboard tips to be paid by credit card.
- **Hotel Housekeeping:** Many travelers will leave the equivalent of \$1–\$2 per day, per room for the hotel housekeeping staff.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Time at Leisure

When you are exploring on your own, it’s useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** In many cities the tip is included in the fare, and will be announced on a sign inside the cab; otherwise a 10% tip is appropriate.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** A service charge is usually included in restaurant and bar bills, but it is customary to leave an additional tip of around 10% of the bill for your waiter or bartender.
- **Public Restrooms:** Most public restrooms in Scandinavia are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops offer only pay-toilets or reserve their restrooms for patrons only. Costs vary from the equivalent of 0.5 euros to 1 euro, so be sure that you have coins (in the local currency) available.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Personalized Air:** You booked international air with us, and have customized it in some way. If you have customized your trip's dates to arrive early, stay longer, or stop on your own in a connecting city, airport transfers will NOT be included. You must also arrange your own accommodations for any additional nights. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner under "My Reservations".

Airport Transfers Cannot Be Purchased

If you booked flights on your own, airport transfers upon your arrival and prior to your return will not be included. These transfers cannot be purchased through GCT prior to your departure or onsite. As you will need to arrange your own transfers, please see our recommended options below:

- **Taxis:** Upon arrival at the airport, there are often taxis waiting outside to transfer you directly to your hotel. For your return transfer, you can also request your hotel concierge arrange for a pick-up in your name.
- **Public Transit:** Most airports around the world either have a shuttle bus or a train system in place to transfer you into the nearest city. You would then be able to take a taxi, board additional public transportation, or walk to your hotel. You can find out the best method of transportation at a Tourist Information Desk at the airport upon your arrival or, prior to your flight, research using either our recommended transfer website, Rome to Rio (www.rome2rio.com) or Google Maps.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with Grand Circle Travel, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more Grand Circle travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a Grand Circle Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in

counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

- **Overseas Arrival:** When you arrive in Helsinki (on the main trip) or in Stockholm (on the trip extension), you'll need to collect your luggage and clear customs. A Grand Circle Representative will meet you outside of customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel or ship. Important note on porters: Airport porters are NOT allowed in the baggage claim area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your transfer vehicle. Your driver will load your luggage into the transfer vehicle.
- **Flight Delays:** Grand Circle Travel is not responsible for flight delays or cancellations. In the unfortunate circumstance that your flight is delayed or changed, please try to reach the regional Grand Circle office (their number will be in your Final Documents) in order to make new arrangements for your transfer. Due to airline regulations our staff is not notified of flight rerouting, and our local representative won't necessarily be aware of your new arrival time. In these cases you will need to arrange your transfer by taxi to your hotel.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more Grand Circle travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a Grand Circle Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Grand Circle Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.
- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your vacation by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Program Director can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Program Director will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is “unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you’ll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Receiving Calls from Home

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one is to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Finland: +358

Sweden: +46

Denmark: +45

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Due to the domestic flight within Finland, the current standard for this trip is 44 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
Same as the main trip.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits. For more packing and luggage tips, you might want to visit www.travelite.org.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Warm clothes & rain gear—needed year-round:** Night temperatures are cool on the water all year, and the daytime weather can be fickle. Regardless of your travel season, bring long sleeves, warm socks and pants, and items to layer up with—a heavy sweatshirt, fleece top or wool sweater, waterproof jacket with a hood, hat, and gloves. Snow boots and a heavy-duty parka are also recommended—except in peak summer, when instead a pair of walking shorts and one or two short-sleeve tops may come in handy. Dress in layers, so you can easily adjust to sudden weather shifts. For possible showers, take a folding travel umbrella and/or rain hat.

- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.
- **Laundry on board:** Your ship has self-service laundry facilities available 24-hours a day. The machines take tokens, which you can purchase at the Information Desk. At time of writing, it cost roughly \$6 to wash and dry one load, which is less expensive than having your laundry done at a hotel. Using this facility is not only handy, it can also reduce the amount of clothes you need to bring.

Style Hints

- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to don “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you. On board the ship, casual dress is acceptable at all times. While travelers vary in their dress style, they generally do not change into a new outfit for dinner.

What to Bring

We have included suggestions from Program Directors and former travelers to help you pack. These lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. You may also want to consult the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

Your accommodations will supply soap, body wash, and shampoo/conditioner. If you prefer a certain brand you may want to bring your own, but otherwise you can rely on what they provide. **And don't forget a reusable water bottle**—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- Sleepwear
- Socks and undergarments
- A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Compact umbrella
- Insect repellent (there are mosquitoes in the north)
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Rubber or waterproof shoes

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- Motion sickness medication

Optional Gear

- Travel alarm

- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Basic sewing kit
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Electrical transformer and plug adapter
- Reading materials
- Travel journal/note pad
- Addresses for postcards
- Photos, small gift for Home-Hosted visit
- Phrase book
- Pocket-size calculator for exchange rates
- Insect repellent
- Wash cloths
- Travel-size hair dryer: Many hotels will provide hair dryers, but not all. If a hair dryer is essential to you consider a travel-size version.

Home-Hosted Visits

It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim countries because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all Grand Circle vacations include a home-hosted visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

Electricity

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity in Scandinavia is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, MP3 players, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you’ll only need one adapter on this trip (Type C plugs work in Type F receptacles), it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

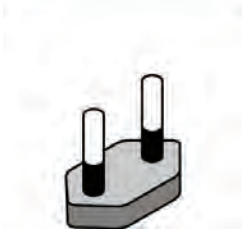
Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Finland: C and F

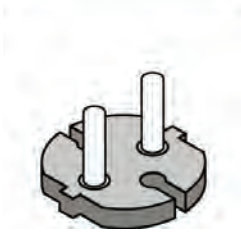
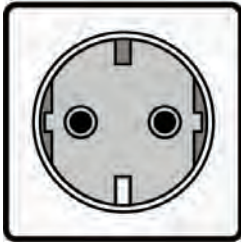
Denmark: C and F

Sweden: C and F

Type C



Type F



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Stockholm, Sweden: Despite its northern location, Stockholm has relatively mild weather compared to other locations at similar latitude. Summers have average daytime highs of 68–72 °F and lows of around 55 °F, but temperatures can reach the mid-eighties. Winters are sometimes snowy with average temperatures ranging from 23 to 34 °F, and sometimes drop below 5 °F. Spring and autumn are generally cool to mild. Yearly precipitation averages 21.2 inches with around 170 wet days and light to moderate rainfall throughout the year. Snowfall occurs mainly from December through March with some snow-rich winters, while others are milder with more rain than snow.

Copenhagen, Denmark: The weather in Copenhagen is mild through all the four seasons—with highs usually in the 60s and lows usually in the 50s—although temperatures in winter can drop down into the 30s and 40s. On the other end of the scale, summertime highs rarely go above 80 °F despite the occasional heat wave. Rainfall is moderate too, but spread throughout the year, so showers are possible in any season. Grey skies are the norm rather than the exception in Copenhagen.

Scandinavia

Mid May to August: During late spring and summer, temperatures can be surprisingly high, comparable to Maine or Vermont; and the sea is generally much warmer than you might expect, largely as a result of the Gulf Stream and the shallowness of the Baltic. The low humidity, too, makes it feel warmer than temperatures may indicate. If you are traveling at this time of year, you're likely to encounter comfortably warm days and enjoy gloriously long hours of sun during your travels. The Midnight Sun will be shining over the northern parts (above the Arctic Circle) of Finland, Norway, and Sweden from mid May to the end of July. However, you should also be prepared for variable weather and temperature drops. The climate and weather along coastlines, in particular, is very much influenced by fluctuations in the sea's condition and is changeable throughout the year. Winds, rain, and clouds are common occurrences, though extended spells of fine settled weather are also likely.

April to mid May/September to October: During early spring and autumn, the weather can turn from warm, sunny, and mild to rainy, misty, and miserable within an hour or so. Be prepared for intermittent spells of wet, cloudy weather. Autumn comes early in this region of the world; summer typically ends at the close of August, and peak fall foliage is in September. If you travel on the shoulder season, come prepared for snow and very cold weather.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to go online to www.gct.com/myplanner for your 10-day forecast.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	HELSINKI, FINLAND			IVALO, FINLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	26 to 16	88 to 87	16	32 to 2	85	4
FEB	27 to 15	89 to 82	11	15 to 1	83	3
MAR	34 to 23	89 to 74	12	25 to 7	77	2
APR	45 to 31	87 to 59	13	36 to 17	71	3
MAY	59 to 41	84 to 51	14	48 to 33	68	5
JUN	66 to 49	85 to 55	17	59 to 43	66	7
JUL	70 to 53	90 to 59	15	65 to 48	68	6
AUG	66 to 51	93 to 66	17	59 to 44	80	8
SEP	56 to 43	93 to 72	15	49 to 37	82	5
OCT	46 to 36	91 to 80	20	36 to 27	87	5
NOV	36 to 28	90 to 88	17	24 to 16	89	4
DEC	30 to 20	89 to 88	16	15 to 5	86	3

MONTH	BERGEN, NORWAY			HAMMERFEST, NORWAY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	39 to 31	82 to 79	21	28 to 19	86 to 84	9
FEB	39 to 31	82 to 72	16	29 to 20	84 to 84	7
MAR	43 to 34	82 to 68	20	31 to 23	84 to 79	10
APR	48 to 37	82 to 62	19	35 to 27	82 to 77	12
MAY	57 to 45	80 to 60	20	41 to 34	81 to 75	25
JUN	62 to 50	82 to 63	19	51 to 42	79 to 70	28
JUL	64 to 53	85 to 66	21	58 to 48	80 to 70	29
AUG	64 to 53	87 to 69	22	56 to 47	81 to 69	28
SEP	58 to 48	85 to 70	24	48 to 41	87 to 77	27
OCT	52 to 44	82 to 72	25	39 to 33	87 to 83	23
NOV	44 to 37	82 to 78	23	33 to 25	83 to 82	14
DEC	41 to 33	83 to 81	22	30 to 22	84 to 84	10

MONTH	STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN			COPENHAGEN, DENMARK		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	31 to 22	89 to 87	13	37 to 30	89 to 85	18
FEB	31 to 20	91 to 80	10	36 to 28	89 to 80	15
MAR	37 to 26	91 to 69	13	41 to 32	89 to 74	15
APR	47 to 31	86 to 57	15	49 to 36	84 to 63	15
MAY	60 to 41	75 to 49	17	60 to 45	76 to 57	14
JUN	67 to 49	74 to 52	18	66 to 52	76 to 59	16
JUL	70 to 54	79 to 56	20	69 to 55	78 to 60	15
AUG	68 to 53	87 to 58	19	69 to 54	82 to 60	16
SEP	58 to 45	91 to 64	20	61 to 50	86 to 67	15
OCT	58 to 45	91 to 64	19	53 to 44	87 to 76	19
NOV	39 to 31	91 to 87	18	44 to 37	87 to 82	19
DEC	32 to 23	91 to 89	15	39 to 32	88 to 85	18

YOUR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Havila Capella or Havila Castor

You'll travel the Norwegian coast aboard one of these two vessels, each of which accommodates an average of about 640 passengers, keeping them small enough to sail into the most narrow of fjords. You will find every amenity you need for a comfortable journey on board, but what you will not find is any of the standard luxury cruise activities or amenities—casinos, shuffleboard, pool, entertainment program, and the like. Instead, the focus is on basic comforts, fine service, wholesome cuisine, and a congenial atmosphere.

Each ship features well-appointed cabins with lower berths, a private bath, and a hair dryer for your convenience. The ships have built-in panoramic viewing areas with lounges. And they have ample open deck space—perfect viewing spots from which to watch your ship pull into a picturesque fishing village, sail through a crystal blue fjord, or float past a mountain.

Cabin Assignments

Cabin assignments are not given out in advance. You will be given this information when you board your ship in Norway. All cabins have lower beds, either one double or two twin. Most cabins have double beds, and cannot be turned into twin beds.

Dining

Aboard ship, you'll dine on three meals a day—breakfast and lunch buffets, and a hearty, set-menu dinner served in the dining room. Your meals will include fresh local produce, fish, and Norwegian specialties.

Some evenings, the set menu for dinner may feature a rather exotic entrée or side dish that you prefer to eat around. For such times, and also for your own dietary enjoyment, we suggest you bring a modest supply of your favorite non-perishable snacks: granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, candy bars, etc. You can also purchase a snack in the cafeteria most any time day or night, but prices are high. If you prefer a different dinner choice, inform the dining room staff at lunchtime.

A selection of wine, beer, and other beverages will be available for purchase onboard your Havila ship. Wine prices will start at approximately \$12-15 per glass, but could vary according to vintage. No outside alcohol is allowed to be consumed onboard.

Electricity On Board Ship

Aboard ship, the cabins are equipped with European-style Europlug (Type C) outlets. Note however that all sockets in Scandinavia (both on board ship and in your hotels) are round and recessed into the wall. You'll need adapters to accommodate this feature.

Embarkation

Please note that due to customs and safety regulations you will be required to handle your own luggage from the bus to the ship's gangway (approximately 400 feet) during embarkation in Norway. The ship's crew will then take the luggage from the gangway to your cabin. There is no portage service available at the pier, and the bus is not allowed to drive up to the gangway.

Headsets

Please note that headsets are provided for tours operated by us, but may not be available for any shore excursions purchased through Havila.

Educational Activities

You'll enjoy your ports even more once you know more about them! The shipboard courier will share information about the unique qualities of the villages you'll visit, facts of cultural interest, and enough history to make each port truly come alive.

Optional shore programs provide you with special opportunities to head inland and see more of Norway. **Please note** that these optional tours are operated directly by the ship and are not controlled/associated with us. Therefore they have to be paid directly on board the ship and cannot be charged to our Optional Tour forms. For more information, visit <http://www.havilavoyages.com/excursions>.

Another option is to ask your Trip Experience Leader and the ships' Expedition Leader for suggestions once you are in port. Or you can stroll through your ports of call on foot, stopping by tiny cafes or window shopping down cobblestone streets. You just choose the option that suits you best.

Gift Shop

The ship has a small gift shop that sells sweatshirts, tee-shirts, postcards, and videos. DVDs purchased abroad may not work in U.S. DVD players; look for a label stating "region one" or an American flag marking.

Phone Service

You can make phone calls to any destination from the ship's pay phone, which takes local currency coins. There are also pay phones near the piers of some ports.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. The only area of the ship where smoking is permitted is a designated section of the outside deck.

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Your Program Director

During your exclusive Grand Circle vacation, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. He or she is supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing trips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of a Program Director throughout your vacation.

Scandinavian Culture

Does Scandinavia even have a common culture? And how does it differ from Nordic culture? First off, Scandinavia refers to the lands originally occupied by the Vikings—which would be Norway, Sweden and Denmark. When referring to Nordic countries, it would be Norway, Sweden and Denmark, with Finland and Iceland added to the mix. While these northern lands differ in language and geography, their shared history and religion have given rise to several cultural similarities.

A belief that Scandinavians are sullen or aloof, however, is one of the most common cultural misunderstandings. If you are unable to engage in a conversation with a local, you might interpret it as someone being standoffish or even rude. But a Scandinavian would perceive it as being polite by not bothering a stranger with small talk. Broadly speaking, Scandinavians place a high value on being polite and do not wish to speak to anyone unnecessarily or even ask for help unless it's absolutely necessary.

A common thread woven throughout Scandinavian culture may be its focus on the wellbeing of the group rather than of the individual. While Americans admire even the most extreme efforts of individuals to achieve success, Scandinavians strive for moderation—in themselves, the community, and the workplace—to achieve a sense of balance. There are reasons why they always make the lists of the “happiest people on earth”. Scandinavians attribute it to their focus on life/work balance—while they do pay high taxes, the generous social programs they get in return take all the fear out of losing their livelihood or growing broke. This allows them to focus on enjoying life. Scandinavia's concern for group wellbeing expresses itself in a variety of ways. The Danes have the centuries-old concept of “hygge,” which is a general state of mind that embraces life.

The Finns have their saunas, whose bonding rituals are intertwined in national culture. And the Swedes consider “fika,” a type of mandatory coffee hour, to be an essential part of each day in order to bond with friends and colleagues.

Workplace culture is far less stressful in Scandinavian countries, too. Everyone expects everyone else to perform to the same standard. Since it’s a common practice among Scandinavians to say what they mean, no one has to search for hidden meanings. And dealing with fewer office politics makes for a far more relaxed and comfortable workplace environment. Scandinavian culture discourages those seen as aiming too high or being too ambitious. In an attempt to make society as homogenous as possible, measures like private schools using the same curriculum as public schools are put in place to ensure equal opportunities for all. And Scandinavians believe that wealth should have no bearing on how you are treated.

Scandinavians love the outdoors and take full advantage of the breathtaking beauty of their landscapes by escaping into nature and enjoying the solitude at every opportunity. Come to think of it, no wonder they’re so happy.

Laundry Service

Laundry service is available through your hotels, although it is expensive. Your Program Director will help you make arrangements for these services if you need them.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

In both Norway and Finland smoking is prohibited in public areas and restaurants.

Hotels

With an emphasis on minimalism and functional design, you’ll discover that hotel rooms in this region are traditionally much smaller than in the United States, and tend to feature a sleek, modern look. Rooms are comfortable, clean, and well-equipped, but you should expect to experience how locals make use of limited space, which may mean that the bathrooms are smaller, or the beds are closer together, than you’d find at home.

Finnish Cuisine

Finnish cuisine forgoes the fancy for simple, hearty, and comforting. The emphasis is on natural ingredients and fresh local produce, with fish and meat also playing a prominent role in traditional Finnish dishes—including pork, beef, elk and reindeer. The country is also known for its fresh-picked mushrooms and berries, such as bilberries and lingonberries, used in cooking and baking. Here are some dishes to try:

- **Ruisleipä:** Part of the Finnish diet for thousands of years, *ruisleipä* is a dense and dark rye bread using sourdough and Finnish yeast that can be enjoyed at any time of day. Varieties of this healthy and hearty staple include *reikäleipa*, meaning “bread with a hole,” *jälkiuunileipä*, a harder bread baked at a low temperature, and several dry and flat versions (like the popular Finn Crisps).

- **Karjalanpiirakka:** Originally from the Karelia region of eastern Finland, this tasty pastry with a rye crust is traditionally filled with rice porridge and topped with egg butter. *Karjalanpiirakka* are favorites for breakfast or anytime as a snack.
- **Kalakukko:** This fish pie from the Finnish region of Savonia is traditionally prepared using rye flour and filled with a small herring-like fish combined with a little pork and bacon.
- **Graavilohi:** A true Finn favorite, *graavilohi* is a Nordic specialty made from raw salmon cured in salt, sugar, and dill. Thinly sliced, it's often served as an appetizer with a dill sauce on bread or with boiled potatoes.
- **Mustikkapiirakka:** When you're looking for something sweet and delicious in the summer months, go for the "blueberry pie" — although it's actually made bilberries, the healthier Nordic cousin of blueberries.
- **Salmiakki:** You could also soothe your sweet tooth with some *salmiakki*, or salty licorice. This Finland favorite of black licorice with ammonium chloride added to give it a salty sourness, might be an acquired taste for some.

Danish Cuisine

Twenty years ago one might've described Danish food as peasant cooking—hearty, stick-to-your-ribs Viking fare that would get you through a long day of farming, fishing, or raiding. Today, Denmark is the epicenter of the New Nordic cuisine, a movement begun by Danish chefs René Redzepi and Claus Meyer, who helmed Copenhagen's Noma restaurant (considered the world's best) and influenced chefs everywhere with their philosophy that celebrates sustainable, locavore, and seasonal ingredients—many of which are foraged and were previously forgotten. It has inspired many cooks to revisit and refine some of the classics of Danish cuisine, like these:

- **Smørrebrød:** These best-known Danish delights are open-faced sandwiches built on a base of buttered *rugbrød*, a dense, dark rye bread. These are not random sandwiches, they are artfully composed, so the dish is colorful and the garnishes are complementary. Toppings might include *syltede sild* (pickled herring) with micro greens; shrimp and egg with dill; or roast beef with pickles, onions, and horseradish. A favorite is *dyrlægens natmad*, which translates as "veterinarian's midnight snack" and includes corned beef, sky (Danish meat aspic), and *leverpostej* (liver pâté) topped with slivered red onions, sprouts, and parsley or dill.
- **Stegt flæsk:** The national dish of Denmark. Crispy pork belly chunks served with boiled potatoes and parsley sauce.
- **Brændendekærlighed:** So many Danes have a "burning love" for bacon, they named this dish after this affliction. This dish is mashed potatoes topped with oven-roasted cubes of bacon, caramelized onions, and butter.
- **Forloren hare:** A Danish meatloaf made with ground pork, leeks, and egg. Bacon strips are woven around the loaf, which is then baked till it looks like an elegant brown basket.

- **Rødspættefilet:** A filet of plaice (a mild white fish) that is breaded and fried. It can be eaten as an entrée, or as the *stjernesked* (“shooting star”) of a *smørrebrød* topped with shrimp, lettuce and caviar from the Limfjord.
- **Tarteletter:** These are flaky pastry tartlets filled with chicken and asparagus in a creamy béchamel sauce.
- **Andesteg:** This dish is a holiday favorite. A roast duck stuffed with apples and prunes, then roasted until golden-brown and served with a sauce made with reserved duck fat, whiskey, and wine.
- **Wienerbrød:** For something sweet to go with your coffee (*bica*), order a Danish but call it by its proper name, *wienerbrød*, which means “Vienna bread” and is a more accurate reflection of its provenance. Even though Danes did not invent them, they love these flaky, croissant-like glazed pastries filled with cream or fruit.
- **Kransekake:** The cake that literally towers above them all. It’s a cone of concentric almond cake rings bound together with a white icing glaze, and sometimes decorated with berries or nuts. They are served at festive occasions (especially New Year’s), and the center of the tower might hold candies, chocolates, and even champagne or wine bottles.

Swedish Cuisine

Like other Scandinavian countries, cuisine in Sweden focuses on fresh ingredients and simple preparations—food without fuss. But that doesn’t mean it lacks personality as the spare approach lets the local fish and produce (like lingonberries) shine through. Some dishes to try are:

- **Kanelbullar:** Cinnamon buns with a sticky glaze. During holidays like Christmas, you may also see *saffransbullar* (saffron buns).
- **Toast skagen:** Shrimp, whitefish roe, Dijon mustard, mayo, and fresh dill on toasted bread served as an elegant appetizer or snack. Also popular as starter/snack is *gubbroa*, an open-faced egg salad sandwich with anchovies.
- **Smorgasbord:** Swedish buffet of meatballs, mini-sausages, salmon, pickled herring, and sides like *knackebrod* (crisp bread)
- **Gul artsoppa:** Yellow pea soup, a variant on split-pea soup
- **Kottbullar:** Swedish meatballs, cooked in a cream-based gravy
- **Princess cake:** If you watch *Great British Bakeoff*, you may remember the *prinsesstarta* challenge, where contestants had to bake this elaborate layer cake topped with a dome of whipped cream and a layer of green marzipan.

Helsinki in Brief

City Layout and Details

Established 450 years ago on the order of the Swedish King Vasa, Helsinki is a youngster of a city by European standards, and it's still the smallest in the world to host the Olympic Games. But its ideal location on lovely peninsulas that jut into the Baltic Sea, its compact size and efficient design, and its stunning architectural variety combine to make a city that is easy to explore on leisurely walks and that holds wonders around every corner.

The bustling Market Square, located on South Harbor, is the charming site of wooden stands and colorful awnings that springs to life every morning. Only a few blocks away is the Helsinki Cathedral, a distinctive landmark with its tall, green dome surrounded by four smaller domes, done in the neoclassical style. It was designed by Carl Ludvig Engel as the climax of his Senate Square layout, and is surrounded by other buildings designed by him.

Another reason for Helsinki's distinctive small-town ambience is the absence of high-rise buildings. No structure here stands more than 12 stories. Nestled near the harbor is the Esplanade, a broad expanse of trees and gardens in the middle of a boulevard that runs from Market Square west to the Swedish Theater. This is the beginning of Mannerheimintie, the city's main thoroughfare. With small shops, large department stores, churches, and outdoor cafes, Mannerheimintie is a visitor's delight. Alive with motion and color from the start of day, Helsinki is no less invigorating at night. The Esplanade was the 1999 winner of the Edison Award for excellence in lighting design, offering a stunning combination of architecture and illumination.

Equally vivid is the work of the internationally honored Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, whose genius sprouts in structures all over Helsinki, from the winged, white marble facade of Finlandia Hall to the cooper-clad curtains of the Academic Bookshop.

Local Transportation

You can purchase a one-day "Transportation Card," providing free travel on the city's buses, trams, metro, and local trains. You will receive further information on specific routes and times of operation during your trip. You may want to take a ride on the tram, which passes some of the principal sights of the city. If you want to hire a taxi, you can signal one from the street. Taxis have an illuminated yellow sign taksi/taxi. When the sign is lit, the taxi is vacant.

Stockholm in Brief

City Layout and Details

Stockholm is built on 14 islands in Lake Malaren, which marks the beginning of an archipelago of 24,000 islands, skerries, and islets stretching all the way to the Baltic Sea. Stockholm's major streets—Kungsgatan (the main shopping street), Birger Jarlsgatan, and Strandvagen (which leads to Djurgarden)—are on Norrmalm (north of the Old Town). Stureplan, which lies at the junction of the major avenues Kungsgatan and Birger Jarlsgatan, is the commercial hub of the city.

East of Stureplan rises Hotorget City, a landmark of modern urban planning, which includes five 18-story skyscrapers. Its main, traffic-free artery is Drottninggatan, a three-block shopper's promenade that eventually leads to Sergels Torg, with a modern sculpture in its center.

South of Sergels Torg, at Gustav Adolfs Torg, sits the Royal Opera House. A block east of the flaming torches of the opera house is the verdant north-to-south stretch of Kungsträdgården—part avenue, part public park—which serves as a popular gathering place for students and a resting stop for shoppers. From here it is a short walk to the Royal Dramatic Theater and the Royal Opera House, as well as two other city landmarks: the Grand Hotel and the National Museum.

Kungsholmen (King's Island) lies across a narrow canal from the rest of the city, and is the site of the elegant Stadshuset (City Hall). South of Gamla Stan (Old Town), and separated from it by a narrow but much-navigated stretch of water, is Södermalm, the southern district of Stockholm. Quieter than its northern counterpart, it's an important residential area with a distinctive flavor of its own. To the east of Gamla Stan, on a large and forested island completely surrounded by the complicated waterways of Stockholm, is Djurgården, part of Sweden's first city national park. This summer pleasure ground of Stockholm is also the site of many of its most popular attractions, including the Vasa Ship museum.

Dining, Evening Entertainment

The city's favorite spot for both indoor and outdoor evening events is Djurgården. Don't miss the nightclubs and jazz venues, some of which stay open until 3 or 4 in the morning, and which keep the city hopping.

All the major opera, theater, and concert seasons begin in the fall, except for special summer festival performances. Most of the major opera and theatrical performances are funded by the state, so ticket prices are reasonable.

Stockholm's restaurant scene began revitalizing some 15 years ago and continues to innovate. What was once a dull landscape of overpriced, uninspiring eateries is now a hotbed of culinary creativity: Stockholm's best chefs have stayed way ahead of the game. Increasingly, their talents are rubbing off on mid-price restaurants – and many of those mid-range restaurants now represent the best dining value in town. Recent trends have seen some of the city's better restaurants pick up on this and offer more set-priced tasting menus and increasing numbers of wine by the glass—making otherwise expensive restaurants relatively affordable. In terms of food, New Swedish is still tops, and chefs look to fine, seasonal, traditional ingredients, prepared with a modern twist. Many less-expensive restaurants offer traditional Swedish cooking. Among Swedish dishes, the best bets are wild game and fish, particularly salmon, and the smorgsbord buffet, which usually offers a good variety at a decent price. Reservations are generally necessary.

Local Transportation

All tunnelbana (T or T-bana), metro, and local trains, and buses in the city are run by Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (SL; www.sl.se). A Stockholm Card (available for varied time periods) covers travel on all SL trains and buses. SL Tourist Cards are primarily for transport, but also

give free entry to some attractions. Or, purchase individual coupons: the minimum fare is two coupons, and each additional zone costs another coupon (up to five coupons for four or five zones).

Tunnelbanna (T-Bana) Metro: The tunnelbana is the most efficient way around Stockholm. Lines converge on T-Centralen, and are connected by an underground walkway to Centralstationen. There are three main lines, numerous branches and more than 100 stations, making the major sites easy to get to. The blue line features a collection of modern art decorating the underground stations. Stations at other lines are also decorated.

Bus: The bus system contains a number of lines that make stops throughout the city, often servicing areas like the Djurgården neighborhood, which is out of the T-bana's reach. Some night buses run from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. and are a good alternative to taxis. Bus timetables and route maps are complicated but the system offers useful connections to suburban attractions.

Taxi: Readily available, but very expensive (rides from the airport usually start at around \$45; in town a 15-20 minute ride will be about \$25-\$30). Drivers are required to publish prices, and prices are not regulated. Make sure you know the fare before you get into the taxi.

Bicycle: In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Stockholm' can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.

Copenhagen in Brief

City Layout and Details

Old Copenhagen is defined as a rough square by Nørreport Station to the north, Rådhuspladsen (Town Hall Square) to the west, and Kongens Nytorv to the east.

Strøget is Europe's longest continuous pedestrians-only route. It runs east from Town Hall Square to Kongens Nytorv, and is composed of five interconnected streets: Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelskaftet, Amagertorv, and Østergade and roughly bisects Old Copenhagen. Strøget is a stroller's and shopper's heaven: lined with shops, bars, restaurants, and, in season, with sidewalk cafes it is a favorite of visitors and locals alike. On the Eastern end, Pistolstræde is a maze of galleries, restaurants, and boutiques, housed in restored 18th-century buildings.

Fiolstræde (Violet St.), closer to the western end of Stroget, offers antiques shops and bookshops and cuts through the university (Latin Quarter). At the end of Fiolstræde you can turn onto Rosengaarden where you'll find Kultorvet (Coal Square). Here you'll find join the third main pedestrian street, Købmagergade (Butcher St.) which runs gently south until it meets up with Strøget at the Amagertorv section.

At the eastern end of Strøget you approach Kongens Nytorv (King's Square), where you'll find the Royal Theater and Magasin, the largest department store in Copenhagen. Across the square you come to the beginning of Nyhavn, the former seamen's quarter that now features upscale restaurants, apartments, cafes, and boutiques.

Denmark's government is centered on the small island of Slotsholmen, which is connected to the center by eight different bridges. The island also features several museums, most notably Christiansborg Castle.

Entertainment

Free time? Try strolling the Strøget, a three quarter mile stretch of shops between Rådhuspladsen and Kongens Nytorv . If you get peckish or thirsty midway, you can hop over a street to the Vestergade, lined with historic buildings, restaurants, stores and bars for a little more variety. Nynhavn (New Harbor) is the place to be on a good day – outdoor cafes abound, and classic buildings overlook the classic ships that line the harbor front.

In summer, a visit to Tivoli Gardens is a must. Tivoli's twenty-one acres encompasses impressive structures (the Chinese Tower, the Glass Hall Theater, and the Pantomime Theater among them), flower beds, fountains and lovely landscaping. The park features 5 roller coasters, including one of the world's oldest wooden coasters, as well as other rides. Locals and visitors alike find the ambience and experience a repeatable pleasure. If you're not interested in the rides or the performances you can simply stroll, take in the view and people watch. (There is an entrance fee, but many of the events inside are included).

You'll find the nightlife in several neighborhoods, including Strøget and nearby areas; in Vesterbro, with its main street on Vesterbrogade just across from Tivoli Gardens; and on Istegade — home to some of the today's trendier bars and cafés. The area just off Kongens Nytorv on Gothersgade is another busy nightlife spot.

The famed jazz venues of Copenhagen are largely closed. Nightspots now cater to a wider range of music — from ballroom music to house, rap, and techno. Restaurants, cafés, bars, and clubs stay open after midnight, a few until 5 am.

Local Transportation

Copenhagen is sufficiently compact and inviting that most of your travel in the city should be as a result of a leisurely stroll. Many of the major sightseeing attractions are close to one another.

By Bus: Copenhagen's buses are an inexpensive way to get around a little further out, if necessary. Most buses leave from Rådhuspladsen. A basic ticket buys an hour of travel and unlimited transfers within the zone where you started your trip. For information, visit www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/planning/public-transport

Metro: Copenhagen's Metro is almost 20 years old, and it connects the east to west of the city with the center. It operates 24 hours a day, and Metro fares are integrated into Copenhagen's zonal system. A joint zone fare system works with Copenhagen Transport buses, State Railway, and the Metro. You have the option to purchase a *grundbillet* (base ticket), 10 tickets, or a 24-hour bus and train ticket which allows you to travel through nearly half of Zealand.

Discount Passes: The Copenhagen Card entitles you to free and unlimited travel by bus and rail throughout the metropolitan area (including North Zealand) and free admission to many sights and museums. The card is available for one day or three days.

Taxis: Watch for the FRI (free) sign or a green light when hailing a taxi. Be sure the taxis are metered. Tips are included in the meter price and many drivers speak English.

Bicycle: In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Copenhagen can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro – and bikes are popular with the residents. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your vacation. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. Grand Circle is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly. If the shop is outside the country, you should expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from the standards you are used to, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Finland

Handicrafts, jewelry, hand-woven ryijy rugs, furniture, glassware, ceramics, furs, and textiles are some of the world-renowned specialties.

Denmark

A showcase for world-famous Danish design and craftsmanship, Copenhagen seems to have been designed with shoppers in mind. The best buys are such luxury items as crystal, porcelain, silver, and furs. Look for offers and sales (tilbud or udsalg in Danish) and check antiques and secondhand shops for classics at cut-rate prices.

VAT: Although prices are inflated by a hefty 25% Value-Added Tax (Danes call it MOMS), non-European Union citizens can receive about an 18% refund. For more details and a list of all tax-free shops, ask at the tourist office for a copy of the Tax-Free Shopping Guide.

Sweden

Swedish artisans create wonderful handmade glass and crystal (including Orrefors), which will make collectors proud. Swedish designer jewelry is also popular. Other traditional arts and crafts of the region include hand painted wooden Dalecarlian (Dala) horses, Viking and troll figures. If you have a sweet tooth, try Marabou chocolate, or try Glogg – an alcoholic drink served hot.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Finland

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 130,558 square miles
- **Capital:** Helsinki
- **Geography:** Finland is heavily forested and contains thousands of lakes, numerous rivers, and extensive areas of marshland. Except for a small highland region in the extreme northwest, the country is a lowland less than 600 feet above sea level.
- **Languages:** Finnish, Swedish
- **Location:** Finland is bordered to the north and west by Norway and Sweden, and to the east by Russia.
- **Population:** 5,518,371 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Lutheran 72%, Orthodox 1.1%, other 1.6%, unspecified 25.3%
- **Time zones:** Finland is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, seven hours ahead of EST.

National Holidays: Finland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Finland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Midsummer. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 May Day

12/06 Independence Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Finland: A Brief History

While sharing many cultural traits with its Scandinavian neighbors, Finland's linguistic and historic roots differ than those of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway—which share a common root language and Viking heritage. Finland's early history began with settlements of nomadic Sami people, Tavastians, and others during the first millennium B.C. With Vikings choosing not to establish settlements here, Finland developed into an important center of trade during the Viking Age. But Finland's powerful neighbors, Sweden and Russia, would battle for centuries over regional dominance. While Finland was able to preserve its language, culture, and traditions, Sweden would end up ruling it from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. And after that, Russia ruled Finland from 1809 to 1917.

After the 1917 Russian Revolution, Finland declared its independence. But the new state was immediately drawn into a civil war between the social classes—with Bolshevik-leaning “Reds” (factory and farm workers) supported by the new Soviet Union on one side, and the “Whites” (property owners), supported by Imperial Germany, on the other. The Whites emerged victorious and installed a puppet king. After the defeat of Germany in World War I, Germany’s influence disappeared and Finland became a republic, electing its first president in 1919. Relations remained tense between Finland and Soviet Union.

Finland’s role during World War II made perfect sense to the Finns, but it can make everyone else’s head spin. At the war’s outbreak, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, expecting a quick victory. Instead, the Finns fought way above their weight while holding the Soviet army back and humiliating Stalin. The Finns were eventually worn down and ended up ceding some border lands to Stalin, but they preserved their independence and gained the admiration of the world, who viewed it as a tiny democratic nation almost defeating an aggressive bully nation. Known as the “Winter War” of 1939/40, the Finns would then find themselves the “Continuation War,” which began when Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941. Looking at it more as choosing between the lesser of two evils, the Finns allied themselves with Germany—primarily to gain back the territory they had just lost. But the Red Army was much stronger now, and after Germany’s surrender at Stalingrad, Finland entered secret negotiations with Moscow to leave the war. A treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1944 left Finland independent but included a demand that they immediately expel the 200,000 German troops in Finnish Lapland—which led to the “Lapland War,” Finland’s third stage of the war.

While Finland did ally with Hitler, they weren’t looked on as collaborators and refused demands to turn over Finnish Jews. Some say that Finland may have lost World War II, but they won the peace. Other countries bordering the Soviet Union weren’t so lucky, but Finland managed to maintain its autonomy, a democratic government, and market economy. It continued to walk a fine line between the two camps of the Cold War—refusing an American offer to participate in the Marshall plan, developing a trade relationship with the Soviet Union, yet all the while working toward becoming a member of the European Union.

As its war-ravaged agrarian economy transformed into technologically advanced market economy, Finland grew increasingly prosperous and stable. Membership in the EU became a reality in 1995. While the political systems in the Scandinavian neighbors of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are constitutional monarchies, Finland is a republic with a president and parliament system—and on international surveys about nations with the lowest level of political corruption, Finland is often right at the top.

Denmark

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 16,640 square miles
- **Capital:** Copenhagen
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy

- **Geography:** Denmark is the smallest of the Scandinavian countries (it’s about half the size of Maine). The country occupies the Jutland peninsula, a lowland area, where the highest elevation is only 565 feet above sea level. But that doesn’t mean that the country is entirely flat. Most of its terrain consists of folds, undulations, small, often steep hills, and long, low rises. There are also forests, rivers, lakes, and beaches, many of which are excellent for swimming, though the water may be too cold for some people.
- **Languages:** Danish, Faeroese, Greenlandic (an Inuit dialect), and a small German-speaking minority
- **Location:** Denmark consists of the peninsula of Jutland and a group of islands at the entrance to the Baltic Sea, between Sweden and Germany. The two largest islands are Sjaelland, site of Copenhagen, and Fyn. Denmark also has two self-governing dependencies—Greenland and the Faroe Islands.
- **Population:** 5,605,948 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Evangelical Lutheran 76%, Muslim 4%, other 16%
- **Time zone:** Denmark is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time. Daylight Saving Time is in effect in Denmark from the end of March until the end of September.

National Holidays: Denmark

In addition to the holidays listed below, Denmark celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Ascension Day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year’s Day

05/01 May Day/Labor Day

05/05 Liberation Day

06/05 Constitution Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 2nd Christmas Day

Denmark: A Brief History

About 10,000 years ago, the glacial ice sheets that covered northern Europe began to retreat, attracting huge herds of reindeer. These in turn attracted hunter-gatherers who arrived from southern and eastern Europe. As the climate further warmed, the reindeer migrated north, but the early Danes remained in this fertile land, establishing farming communities by 3000 BC.

By 1800 BC, these proto-Danes were trading weapons, jewelry, amber and furs with people as far away as Rome. They buried their dead in peat bogs and many of those bodies have been remarkably preserved. The first people identified as Danes came from Sweden around 500 AD. They had a written system of communication based on runes. (The symbol we now use for bluetooth devices is based on the runic signature of Harald Bluetooth, or Harald I, the Danish Viking who became king around 900 AD.)

The Viking Age began in 793 AD with the raid on Lindisfarne, an English island monastery. Sporadic raids had likely occurred before this, by Vikings from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. They were not unified and the Danish Vikings primarily raided northeastern England, which at the time was a collection of warring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Danish Vikings had established a large settlement in Kent by 850 AD, and as more Danish colonists arrived, all of northeastern England fell under their control. The exception was Wessex, which reached an agreement with the Danes granting Wessex sovereignty, while the rest of the region was ruled as the Danelaw.

The Danish King Harald Bluetooth converted to Christianity in 965 AD, possibly to appease the Franks at Denmark's door. Harald forcibly established the new religion, and elevated the status of the Christian clergy. But Christianity did not bring peace. The Danes continued to fight to maintain and expand their territory, conquering parts of Germany and Estonia. After the Viking Age ended in 1066, Denmark's power declined. In 1397, the Union of Kalmar united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway under a single monarch, with Denmark as the dominant power.

Beginning in the 16th century, Denmark and Sweden began a lengthy rivalry. In 1658, Sweden took the Danish regions of Skåne, Halland and Blekinge, which are still Sweden's southernmost provinces. In the ensuing century, Denmark suffered more defeats: in 1814, it had to cede Norway to Sweden. But there were important domestic gains. . . . As 19th-century Europe was swept by nationalist fervor and revolution, Denmark had already abolished serfdom and established universal public education. By the 1830s, social and agricultural reforms had boosted the economy; there was a peasant landowner class; and a free press. In 1849, a new constitution created a legislative democracy, ending the monarchy's previous absolute power.

Denmark remained neutral during World War I, and tried to do the same during World War II. It signed a non-aggression pact with the Third Reich. But Germany invaded in 1940, threatening to bomb Copenhagen. With only a small military, the Danish government yielded. The Nazis at first allowed the Danes some autonomy. But when it began pressuring officials to comply with anti-Semitic policies, the Danish government resigned in protest. The Nazis took over in earnest, and the resistance movement grew. Tipped off by a Nazi diplomat that Germany was about to deport Denmark's Jews to concentration camps, the Resistance and many citizens managed to evacuate 7,220 of Denmark's 7,800 Jews to safety in Sweden.

After Germany's defeat, Denmark joined the United Nations in 1945, and became a founding member of NATO in 1949. The latter half of the 20th century saw Denmark's emergence as a prosperous, stable social democracy with one of the world's highest standards of living. In 2000, Denmark voted by referendum not to adopt the euro. It is one of only 5 countries in the world that meets the UN goal for wealthy nations to provide 0.7% of its gross national income for international development assistance. In addition, Denmark has established Danida, Danish Development Assistance, to fight poverty and improve education in developing countries. The current Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, is the second woman and youngest person (at 44) to hold that office. She is the leader of the center-left Socialist Democratic Party.

Sweden

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 173,860 square miles
- **Capital:** Stockholm.
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy
- **Geography:** The countryside of Sweden slopes eastward and southward from the Kjolén Mountains along the Norwegian border, where the peak elevation is Kebnekaise at 6,965 feet in Lapland. In the north are mountains and many lakes. To the south and east are central lowlands and south of them are fertile areas of forest, valley, and plain. Along Sweden's rocky coast, chopped up by bays and inlets, are many islands, the largest of which are Gotland and Oland.
- **Languages:** Swedish
- **Location:** Sweden is situated on the Scandinavian Peninsula, between Norway and Finland. The north of Sweden falls within the Arctic Circle.
- **Population:** 9,960,487 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Lutheran 63%, other (includes Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and none) 17%
- **Time zones:** Sweden is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time.

National Holidays: Sweden

In addition to the holidays listed below, Sweden celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Ascension Day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 May Day

06/06 National Day

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Sweden: A Brief History

Sweden's history began at the end of the last Ice Age, when tribes from central Europe began settling in Sweden's southern regions and the ancestors of the Sami people coming from Siberia, settled in the north. By the 7th century AD, the Svea people would gain supremacy in the region

and their kingdom gave the country its name of Sweden. Like in Norway and Denmark, Sweden flourished and expanded through trade and colonization during the 300 years of the Viking Age, ending by the middle of the 11th century, a period that also saw Sweden converting to Christianity.

In the 13th century, the Swedes conquered Finland, but Russia would continue to battle Sweden for control of Finland. By 1323 Finland was firmly in Swedish hands and would remain a province of Sweden until 1809. In 1397, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were united under a single monarch by the Union of Kalmar. But with Denmark emerging as the dominant power, there was constant infighting between Sweden and Denmark, which came to a head in 1520 when Denmark invaded Sweden. Sweden would then leave the union that brought the three nations together resulting in the beginning of the Vasa Dynasty and the creation of the first true Swedish nation-state.

Remaining neutral during both World War I and II, Sweden would not have to rebuild from the ground up as many other European nations did. The ruling Social Democrats began implementing welfare protection measures, the economy grew steadily, and Swedes achieved a high standard of living. In the 1970s, Sweden's economy went into a decline, however, and wouldn't stabilize again until the late 1990s. Sweden joined the EU in 1995 and has seen steady improvements to its economy in recent years.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Scandinavia

A History of Scandinavia by T. K. Derry (History) Chronicles the history of each of the Scandinavian countries.

A History of the Vikings by Gwyn Jones (History) Before their defeat at Hastings in 1066, the Vikings' sphere of influence extended from Constantinople to America. Gwyn Jones brings their civilization alive in this portrait of the Viking adventures, based on surviving documents and archaeological finds. With black and white illustrations.

Smilla's Sense of Snow by Peter Hoeg (Mystery) A mystery that has achieved literary acclaim. It has become mandatory reading for many Scandinavian Studies programs at universities, and was the basis for the 1996 Oscar-nominated movie. Be warned: There are some racy and controversial scenes.

Finland

Seven Brothers by Aleksis Kivi (1870, Historical Fiction). A Finnish classic, *Seven Brothers* follows the lives of seven brothers in rural Finland during the nineteenth century.

The Unknown Soldier by Vaino Linna (1954, Fiction). A war novel narrating Finnish soldiers during the Continuation War of 1941-1944 between Finland and the Soviet Union, a war fought over nationalism and territory lost to the USSR in the Winter War the previous year.

The Year of the Hare by Arto Paasilinna (1975, Fiction). The adventures of journalist Kaarlo Vatanen only started when he nearly runs over a hare. After nursing the injured hare back to health, Vatanen decides to leave his old life, job and wife, behind for the open road and wacky hijinks.

Kalevala by Elias Lonnrot (1835, Folklore). *Kalevala* is a collection of 19th century epic poetry of Karelian and Finnish mythology, written down from its traditional oral stories. A national epic of Finland, the *Kalevala* tells the story of the Creation of the Earth, all the way to the integration of Christianity.

Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Coalition in World War II by Henrik Olai Lunde (2011, History). Following the bloody Winter War against Soviet Russia, where thousands died and Finland was forced to cede multiple territories to USSR rule, Finland teamed up with Nazi Germany in the Continuation War, from 1941 to 1944, in hopes of winning back their lost land.

Denmark

We, the Drowned by Carsten Jensen (2011, Fiction) An epic seafaring adventure that follows the inhabitants of the Danish town of Marstal from 1848 to World War II, when the men sail the world and the women who are left behind form a community. The book is long (600 plus pages) and deals frankly with war, violence, and cruelty. But it was a runaway international bestseller and lauded for its use of fantastical elements.

Iceland's Bell by Halldor Laxness (2003, Fiction) Nobel Laureate Halldor Laxness reinvents the traditional Icelandic saga and injects it with a modern sensibility and a satirical undercurrent that speaks to our age. The plot pits an impoverished Danish colony – Iceland in the 17th century – against the grand historical workings of Danish and Icelandic history. Three interconnected stories reveal the political and personal conflicts of the day in historical context.

On Tycho's Island: Tycho Brahe and his Assistants, 1570–1601 by John Robert Christianson (1999, Biography/History) Chiefly famed as an astronomer, this book offers a fuller vision of Tycho Brahe as Renaissance man and scientist. From his private island in Denmark, Brahe assembled and manipulated the artists, nobility and the intelligentsia of the age to create breakthroughs in astronomy, science and research.

Winter's Tales and ***Seven Gothic Tales*** by Isak Dinesen (1934, Stories) Best known for *Out Of Africa*, her memoir of 20 years running and living on a coffee plantation in Africa, Karen Blixen (pen name, Isak Dinesen) also wrote short tales based in her homeland, Denmark. *Winter's Tales* and *Seven Gothic Tales* are generally considered the high water marks of her shorter works.

The Complete Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen (Folklore) There are several different anthologies of these fairy tales, written by Denmark's famous poet, novelist, and writer of short stories. Considered a genius for his inventiveness and imagination, his works continue to captivate both children and adults.

Sweden

A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman (2014, Fiction). Funny and poignant, this first-time novel by Stockholm native Fredrik Backman about an old curmudgeon who regains a will to live when a young family moves in next door made best seller lists around the world.

The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson (2012, Fiction). A publishing sensation from another first time Swedish author, this one is the riotous exploits of a centenarian with a backstory better than Forrest Gump's who is desperate to avoid his 100th birthday party. And a sequel was just released: ***The Accidental Further Adventures of the 100-Year-Old Man***.

A Year in Lapland: Guest of the Reindeer Herders by Hugh Beach (2001, Culture) An American anthropologist's account of a year spent living with the Sami (Lapps) and learning in depth about their way of life. Though set among the Tuorpon Saami in the Jokkmokk District of northern Sweden, this detailed picture of Sami culture says much about the ways of these people across all their homeland in northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, and *The Girl who Kicked the Hornet's Nest by Stieg Larsson (Mystery) A huge hit when *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was first released in the U.S. in 2008, this series of mysteries set in Sweden became a worldwide phenomenon. Dark and gritty, they are reminiscent of old-time noir films. Sadly, Larsson died in 2004 shortly after delivering the manuscripts of all three books.

Suggested Films & Videos

Finland

The Winter War (1989, Drama) An excellent Finnish war film (original title *Talvisota*) that tells the story of the resistance of a platoon of Ostrobothnian Finns, when Russia attacked Finland in November of '39. The Finns fought hard against overwhelming odds, with meager supplies, and the movie faithfully presents their action in the forbidding snowy landscape.

The Unknown Soldier (1955, Drama) An adaptation of Väinö Linna's novel this is a story about the Continuation War between Finland and the Soviet Union, told from the view of ordinary Finnish soldiers. Gritty and realistic, the film remains the most successful film ever made in Finland, and more than half of Finland's population viewed it in theaters.

Elina: As If I Wasn't There (2002, Drama) In rural Sweden of the early 1950s, Elina returns to school again after an illness. From a Finnish-speaking minority, Elina has conflicts with her biased teacher, and finds consolation wandering on the dangerous marshlands while speaking with her dead father.

Pelikaanimies (2004, Fantasy) A pelican becomes a gawky young man who learns to speak, thanks to his talent for imitation. He befriends two children who—unlike adults—see that their new neighbor 'Mr Berd' is not a man but a bird in a suit. The Pelican Man lands a job at the opera and falls in love. When adults discover the truth, trouble starts in this unusual and charming film.

Mother of Mine (2005, War/Drama) Amidst the conflict of World War II, Eero, a Finnish boy, is sent to live with a Swedish foster family by his mother. Eero feels abandoned by his Swedish mother, but unwelcomed by his new foster mother. When Eero returns to Finland following the war, his feelings of abandonment and confusion intensify.

Denmark

The Danish Girl (2015, Drama) The Danish artist Einar Wegener (later known as Lili Elbe) was one of the first people to undergo sex reassignment surgery. This biopic depicts Elbe's early career and marriage to artist Gerda Gottlieb, and the Bohemian worlds of Copenhagen and Paris in the 20s and early 30s.

A Royal Affair (2012, Historical Drama) The mentally ill King Christian VII comes to rely on his friend and physician, Johann Struensee (Mads Mikkelsen), a radical Enlightenment thinker from Germany. So, too, does the lonely Queen Caroline (Alicia Vikander), who begins a passionate affair

with the doctor. The king learns of their liaison, but protects them, and makes Struensee a Royal Advisor who essentially rules in the king's name. But his reforms are cut short when plotting aristocrats use the affair and Struensee's foreign status to bring a tragic end to this true story.

Pele the Conqueror (1988, Drama) Directed by Billie August, this Danish-Swedish production won the 1989 Oscar for Best Foreign Film, and star Max von Sydow was nominated for Best Actor. It follows the early 19th-century widower Lasse, who emigrates with his 12-year old son Pelle to the Danish island of Bornholm in search of a better life. That is not what they find.

Babette's Feast (1988, Comedy) Set on the rugged coast of 19th century Denmark, this film is from a short story by Isak Dinesen. Two beautiful daughters grow up with a clergyman father, who preaches self-denial. After his death, the sisters uphold his inflexible practices until the arrival of a French refugee, Babette. She cooks and for them, and introduces them to the deep pleasure of a gourmet French meal. Winner of the 1987 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.

The Danish Solution (2003, Documentary) Filmmakers Karen Cantor and Camilla Kjaerulff , with Garrison Keillor narrating, reveal how the citizens of Denmark protected their Jewish population against Hitler's attempt to impose export his final solution into Denmark.

Sweden

My Life as a Dog (1985, Drama) The story of Ingemar, a 12-year-old Swedish boy sent to live with his childless aunt and uncle in a country village when his mother falls ill, resulting in a Swedish look at the adult world through a child's eyes. A lovely, sometimes intense coming of age story with rural Sweden as backdrop.

Smiles of a Summer Night (1955, Comedy) Ingmar Bergman's idea of a bedroom farce brought him international stardom. A melancholy comedy the film depicts the romantic entanglements of three 19th-century couples during a weekend at a country estate. It's also pure Bergman: sharp, serious, thoughtful, and sobering, though there's an undercurrent of humor that the venerable director of such serious film classics like *The Seventh Seal* is not particularly known for.

Useful Websites

Grand Circle Forum (tips from previous travelers)

www.gct.com/forum

Grand Circle Shop

www.grandcircleshop.com

Grand Circle Frequently Asked Questions

www.gct.com/faq

**International Health Information/CDC
(Centers for Disease Control)**

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)
www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App, Skype, or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

TripWhistle

Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more

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TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this vacation.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 3 blank passport pages.
- **Optional pre-trip extension to Stockholm, Sweden:** No additional pages needed.
- **Optional post-trip extension to Copenhagen, Denmark:** No additional pages needed.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** You will need a total of 3 pages.

No Visas Required

Travelers with a U.S. passport do not need any visas for this vacation, including the optional trip extensions.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Traveling with a minor may require certain documentation for border crossings. For further detail on the required documentation, please contact the local embassy or state government.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

Please review the information below prior to departing on this trip. We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience.

GROUP SIZE

- A maximum of 42 travelers, led by a local Grand Circle Program Director

PACING

- 15 days, with 4 hotel stays and a 5-night cruise
- 1 internal flight of 1.5 hours

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 2-3 continuous miles unassisted and participate in 2 hours of physical activities daily, including stairs
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, or crutches
- Travelers using other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them
- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones
- Travel by 45-seat coach and train

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 35-80°F during cruising season
- June-August are the warmest months
- May and September weather can be unpredictable and change quickly

Health Check

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential to fully enjoy your trip. If you have ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date.

- Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. (You can use the “Keep Your Abilities in Mind” on the previous page as a guideline to discuss with him or her.)
- You may want to have a dental exam before your trip. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling.
- If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition.

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: travel.state.gov (Select “Find International Travel Information” then select “Country Information”; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Your Health Abroad” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying

- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Traveler Support team at **1-800-321-2835**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Water in Scandinavia is considered safe, but as an added safety precaution against possible stomach upsets, we recommend you drink bottled water as much as possible.
- Never drink from a mountain stream, fjord, or river, regardless of how clean it might appear.
- Bottled water is usually for sale in hotels, food shops, and restaurants.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler’s checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It’s more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency instead.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

Denmark: Danish *kroner* (Kr., DKK)

Sweden: Swedish Krona (kr., SEK)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you’ll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1–\$5 each time you use an out-of-network ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

Scandinavia: ATMs are widely available throughout Scandinavia and should not be hard to find, especially in larger cities.

Credit & Debit Cards

Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although the Discover card is accepted in some countries outside the U.S., it is not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

Scandinavia: Credit and debit cards are readily accepted in Scandinavia. Some cafes, restaurants, and attractions will only accept credit cards. Visa is the most widely accepted credit card in Scandinavia, followed by MasterCard and then American Express.

Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards, or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

On Board Ship

Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Cruise Card:** Upon embarkation, you will receive a Cruise Card with which to purchase food, drink, and land excursions (offered directly by the Havila ship) not included in your tour. Upon receipt of the Cruise Card, you will swipe your credit card so that your purchases can be charged to it. The Cruise Card can then be used for payments against your room. The day before disembarkation in Kirkenes, you will receive a bill for your purchases, which will be charged to your credit card directly by the Havila ship.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the cruise and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is paid with your ship guide (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. To make it easy for you to budget, we have quoted the amounts in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars.

- **GCT Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your GCT Program Director at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$6–\$8 per traveler for each day their Program Director is with them. *Please note that tips for your Program Director can only be in the form of cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Program Director during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard:** Gratuities to the shipboard personnel are not included in the cost of your voyage. If you wish to acknowledge those who have worked to make your time on board enjoyable, a gratuity of \$3–\$4 per person, per night, is customary. On some steamers, tips to dining and cabin staff are pooled. In this case, you can pay one gratuity (based on the above rate) in kroner, which you’ll leave in an envelope with a staff member before disembarking. It is also acceptable for shipboard tips to be paid by credit card.
- **Hotel Housekeeping:** Many travelers will leave the equivalent of \$1–\$2 per day, per room for the hotel housekeeping staff.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Time at Leisure

When you are exploring on your own, it’s useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** In many cities the tip is included in the fare, and will be announced on a sign inside the cab; otherwise a 10% tip is appropriate.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** A service charge is usually included in restaurant and bar bills, but it is customary to leave an additional tip of around 10% of the bill for your waiter or bartender.
- **Public Restrooms:** Most public restrooms in Scandinavia are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops offer only pay-toilets or reserve their restrooms for patrons only. Costs vary from the equivalent of 0.5 euros to 1 euro, so be sure that you have coins (in the local currency) available.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Personalized Air:** You booked international air with us, and have customized it in some way. If you have customized your trip's dates to arrive early, stay longer, or stop on your own in a connecting city, airport transfers will NOT be included. You must also arrange your own accommodations for any additional nights. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner under "My Reservations".

Airport Transfers Cannot Be Purchased

If you booked flights on your own, airport transfers upon your arrival and prior to your return will not be included. These transfers cannot be purchased through GCT prior to your departure or onsite. As you will need to arrange your own transfers, please see our recommended options below:

- **Taxis:** Upon arrival at the airport, there are often taxis waiting outside to transfer you directly to your hotel. For your return transfer, you can also request your hotel concierge arrange for a pick-up in your name.
- **Public Transit:** Most airports around the world either have a shuttle bus or a train system in place to transfer you into the nearest city. You would then be able to take a taxi, board additional public transportation, or walk to your hotel. You can find out the best method of transportation at a Tourist Information Desk at the airport upon your arrival or, prior to your flight, research using either our recommended transfer website, Rome to Rio (www.rome2rio.com) or Google Maps.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with Grand Circle Travel, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more Grand Circle travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a Grand Circle Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in

counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

- **Overseas Arrival:** When you arrive in Helsinki (on the main trip) or in Stockholm (on the trip extension), you'll need to collect your luggage and clear customs. A Grand Circle Representative will meet you outside of customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel or ship. Important note on porters: Airport porters are NOT allowed in the baggage claim area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your transfer vehicle. Your driver will load your luggage into the transfer vehicle.
- **Flight Delays:** Grand Circle Travel is not responsible for flight delays or cancellations. In the unfortunate circumstance that your flight is delayed or changed, please try to reach the regional Grand Circle office (their number will be in your Final Documents) in order to make new arrangements for your transfer. Due to airline regulations our staff is not notified of flight rerouting, and our local representative won't necessarily be aware of your new arrival time. In these cases you will need to arrange your transfer by taxi to your hotel.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more Grand Circle travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a Grand Circle Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Grand Circle Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.
- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your vacation by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Program Director can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Program Director will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is “unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you’ll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Receiving Calls from Home

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one is to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Finland: +358

Sweden: +46

Denmark: +45

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Due to the domestic flight within Finland, the current standard for this trip is 44 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
Same as the main trip.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits. For more packing and luggage tips, you might want to visit www.travelite.org.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Warm clothes & rain gear—needed year-round:** Night temperatures are cool on the water all year, and the daytime weather can be fickle. Regardless of your travel season, bring long sleeves, warm socks and pants, and items to layer up with—a heavy sweatshirt, fleece top or wool sweater, waterproof jacket with a hood, hat, and gloves. Snow boots and a heavy-duty parka are also recommended—except in peak summer, when instead a pair of walking shorts and one or two short-sleeve tops may come in handy. Dress in layers, so you can easily adjust to sudden weather shifts. For possible showers, take a folding travel umbrella and/or rain hat.

- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.
- **Laundry on board:** Your ship has self-service laundry facilities available 24-hours a day. The machines take tokens, which you can purchase at the Information Desk. At time of writing, it cost roughly \$6 to wash and dry one load, which is less expensive than having your laundry done at a hotel. Using this facility is not only handy, it can also reduce the amount of clothes you need to bring.

Style Hints

- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to don “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you. On board the ship, casual dress is acceptable at all times. While travelers vary in their dress style, they generally do not change into a new outfit for dinner.

What to Bring

We have included suggestions from Program Directors and former travelers to help you pack. These lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. You may also want to consult the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

Your accommodations will supply soap, body wash, and shampoo/conditioner. If you prefer a certain brand you may want to bring your own, but otherwise you can rely on what they provide. **And don't forget a reusable water bottle**—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- Sleepwear
- Socks and undergarments
- A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Compact umbrella
- Insect repellent (there are mosquitoes in the north)
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Rubber or waterproof shoes

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- Motion sickness medication

Optional Gear

- Travel alarm

- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Basic sewing kit
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Electrical transformer and plug adapter
- Reading materials
- Travel journal/note pad
- Addresses for postcards
- Photos, small gift for Home-Hosted visit
- Phrase book
- Pocket-size calculator for exchange rates
- Insect repellent
- Wash cloths
- Travel-size hair dryer: Many hotels will provide hair dryers, but not all. If a hair dryer is essential to you consider a travel-size version.

Home-Hosted Visits

It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim countries because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all Grand Circle vacations include a home-hosted visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

Electricity

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity in Scandinavia is 220-240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, MP3 players, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220-240. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you'll only need one adapter on this trip (Type C plugs work in Type F receptacles), it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

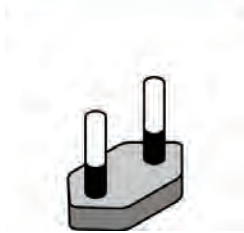
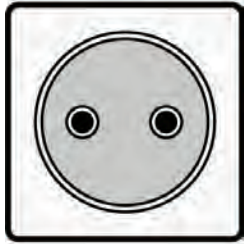
Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Finland: C and F

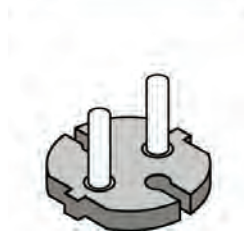
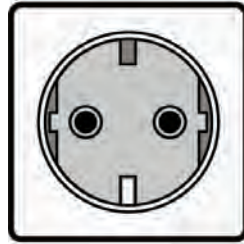
Denmark: C and F

Sweden: C and F

Type C



Type F



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Stockholm, Sweden: Despite its northern location, Stockholm has relatively mild weather compared to other locations at similar latitude. Summers have average daytime highs of 68–72 °F and lows of around 55 °F, but temperatures can reach the mid-eighties. Winters are sometimes snowy with average temperatures ranging from 23 to 34 °F, and sometimes drop below 5 °F. Spring and autumn are generally cool to mild. Yearly precipitation averages 21.2 inches with around 170 wet days and light to moderate rainfall throughout the year. Snowfall occurs mainly from December through March with some snow-rich winters, while others are milder with more rain than snow.

Copenhagen, Denmark: The weather in Copenhagen is mild through all the four seasons—with highs usually in the 60s and lows usually in the 50s—although temperatures in winter can drop down into the 30s and 40s. On the other end of the scale, summertime highs rarely go above 80 °F despite the occasional heat wave. Rainfall is moderate too, but spread throughout the year, so showers are possible in any season. Grey skies are the norm rather than the exception in Copenhagen.

Scandinavia

Mid May to August: During late spring and summer, temperatures can be surprisingly high, comparable to Maine or Vermont; and the sea is generally much warmer than you might expect, largely as a result of the Gulf Stream and the shallowness of the Baltic. The low humidity, too, makes it feel warmer than temperatures may indicate. If you are traveling at this time of year, you're likely to encounter comfortably warm days and enjoy gloriously long hours of sun during your travels. The Midnight Sun will be shining over the northern parts (above the Arctic Circle) of Finland, Norway, and Sweden from mid May to the end of July. However, you should also be prepared for variable weather and temperature drops. The climate and weather along coastlines, in particular, is very much influenced by fluctuations in the sea's condition and is changeable throughout the year. Winds, rain, and clouds are common occurrences, though extended spells of fine settled weather are also likely.

April to mid May/September to October: During early spring and autumn, the weather can turn from warm, sunny, and mild to rainy, misty, and miserable within an hour or so. Be prepared for intermittent spells of wet, cloudy weather. Autumn comes early in this region of the world; summer typically ends at the close of August, and peak fall foliage is in September. If you travel on the shoulder season, come prepared for snow and very cold weather.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to go online to www.gct.com/myplanner for your 10-day forecast.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	HELSINKI, FINLAND			IVALO, FINLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	26 to 16	88 to 87	16	32 to 2	85	4
FEB	27 to 15	89 to 82	11	15 to 1	83	3
MAR	34 to 23	89 to 74	12	25 to 7	77	2
APR	45 to 31	87 to 59	13	36 to 17	71	3
MAY	59 to 41	84 to 51	14	48 to 33	68	5
JUN	66 to 49	85 to 55	17	59 to 43	66	7
JUL	70 to 53	90 to 59	15	65 to 48	68	6
AUG	66 to 51	93 to 66	17	59 to 44	80	8
SEP	56 to 43	93 to 72	15	49 to 37	82	5
OCT	46 to 36	91 to 80	20	36 to 27	87	5
NOV	36 to 28	90 to 88	17	24 to 16	89	4
DEC	30 to 20	89 to 88	16	15 to 5	86	3

MONTH	BERGEN, NORWAY			HAMMERFEST, NORWAY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	39 to 31	82 to 79	21	28 to 19	86 to 84	9
FEB	39 to 31	82 to 72	16	29 to 20	84 to 84	7
MAR	43 to 34	82 to 68	20	31 to 23	84 to 79	10
APR	48 to 37	82 to 62	19	35 to 27	82 to 77	12
MAY	57 to 45	80 to 60	20	41 to 34	81 to 75	25
JUN	62 to 50	82 to 63	19	51 to 42	79 to 70	28
JUL	64 to 53	85 to 66	21	58 to 48	80 to 70	29
AUG	64 to 53	87 to 69	22	56 to 47	81 to 69	28
SEP	58 to 48	85 to 70	24	48 to 41	87 to 77	27
OCT	52 to 44	82 to 72	25	39 to 33	87 to 83	23
NOV	44 to 37	82 to 78	23	33 to 25	83 to 82	14
DEC	41 to 33	83 to 81	22	30 to 22	84 to 84	10

MONTH	STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN			COPENHAGEN, DENMARK		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	31 to 22	89 to 87	13	37 to 30	89 to 85	18
FEB	31 to 20	91 to 80	10	36 to 28	89 to 80	15
MAR	37 to 26	91 to 69	13	41 to 32	89 to 74	15
APR	47 to 31	86 to 57	15	49 to 36	84 to 63	15
MAY	60 to 41	75 to 49	17	60 to 45	76 to 57	14
JUN	67 to 49	74 to 52	18	66 to 52	76 to 59	16
JUL	70 to 54	79 to 56	20	69 to 55	78 to 60	15
AUG	68 to 53	87 to 58	19	69 to 54	82 to 60	16
SEP	58 to 45	91 to 64	20	61 to 50	86 to 67	15
OCT	58 to 45	91 to 64	19	53 to 44	87 to 76	19
NOV	39 to 31	91 to 87	18	44 to 37	87 to 82	19
DEC	32 to 23	91 to 89	15	39 to 32	88 to 85	18

YOUR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Havila Capella or Havila Castor

You'll travel the Norwegian coast aboard one of these two vessels, each of which accommodates an average of about 640 passengers, keeping them small enough to sail into the most narrow of fjords. You will find every amenity you need for a comfortable journey on board, but what you will not find is any of the standard luxury cruise activities or amenities—casinos, shuffleboard, pool, entertainment program, and the like. Instead, the focus is on basic comforts, fine service, wholesome cuisine, and a congenial atmosphere.

Each ship features well-appointed cabins with lower berths, a private bath, and a hair dryer for your convenience. The ships have built-in panoramic viewing areas with lounges. And they have ample open deck space—perfect viewing spots from which to watch your ship pull into a picturesque fishing village, sail through a crystal blue fjord, or float past a mountain.

Cabin Assignments

Cabin assignments are not given out in advance. You will be given this information when you board your ship in Norway. All cabins have lower beds, either one double or two twin. Most cabins have double beds, and cannot be turned into twin beds.

Dining

Aboard ship, you'll dine on three meals a day—breakfast and lunch buffets, and a hearty, set-menu dinner served in the dining room. Your meals will include fresh local produce, fish, and Norwegian specialties.

Some evenings, the set menu for dinner may feature a rather exotic entrée or side dish that you prefer to eat around. For such times, and also for your own dietary enjoyment, we suggest you bring a modest supply of your favorite non-perishable snacks: granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, candy bars, etc. You can also purchase a snack in the cafeteria most any time day or night, but prices are high. If you prefer a different dinner choice, inform the dining room staff at lunchtime.

A selection of wine, beer, and other beverages will be available for purchase onboard your Havila ship. Wine prices will start at approximately \$12-15 per glass, but could vary according to vintage. No outside alcohol is allowed to be consumed onboard.

Electricity On Board Ship

Aboard ship, the cabins are equipped with European-style Europlug (Type C) outlets. Note however that all sockets in Scandinavia (both on board ship and in your hotels) are round and recessed into the wall. You'll need adapters to accommodate this feature.

Embarkation

Please note that due to customs and safety regulations you will be required to handle your own luggage from the bus to the ship's gangway (approximately 400 feet) during embarkation in Norway. The ship's crew will then take the luggage from the gangway to your cabin. There is no portage service available at the pier, and the bus is not allowed to drive up to the gangway.

Headsets

Please note that headsets are provided for tours operated by us, but may not be available for any shore excursions purchased through Havila.

Educational Activities

You'll enjoy your ports even more once you know more about them! The shipboard courier will share information about the unique qualities of the villages you'll visit, facts of cultural interest, and enough history to make each port truly come alive.

Optional shore programs provide you with special opportunities to head inland and see more of Norway. **Please note** that these optional tours are operated directly by the ship and are not controlled/associated with us. Therefore they have to be paid directly on board the ship and cannot be charged to our Optional Tour forms. For more information, visit <http://www.havilavoyages.com/excursions>.

Another option is to ask your Trip Experience Leader and the ships' Expedition Leader for suggestions once you are in port. Or you can stroll through your ports of call on foot, stopping by tiny cafes or window shopping down cobblestone streets. You just choose the option that suits you best.

Gift Shop

The ship has a small gift shop that sells sweatshirts, tee-shirts, postcards, and videos. DVDs purchased abroad may not work in U.S. DVD players; look for a label stating "region one" or an American flag marking.

Phone Service

You can make phone calls to any destination from the ship's pay phone, which takes local currency coins. There are also pay phones near the piers of some ports.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. The only area of the ship where smoking is permitted is a designated section of the outside deck.

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Your Program Director

During your exclusive Grand Circle vacation, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. He or she is supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing trips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of a Program Director throughout your vacation.

Scandinavian Culture

Does Scandinavia even have a common culture? And how does it differ from Nordic culture? First off, Scandinavia refers to the lands originally occupied by the Vikings—which would be Norway, Sweden and Denmark. When referring to Nordic countries, it would be Norway, Sweden and Denmark, with Finland and Iceland added to the mix. While these northern lands differ in language and geography, their shared history and religion have given rise to several cultural similarities.

A belief that Scandinavians are sullen or aloof, however, is one of the most common cultural misunderstandings. If you are unable to engage in a conversation with a local, you might interpret it as someone being standoffish or even rude. But a Scandinavian would perceive it as being polite by not bothering a stranger with small talk. Broadly speaking, Scandinavians place a high value on being polite and do not wish to speak to anyone unnecessarily or even ask for help unless it's absolutely necessary.

A common thread woven throughout Scandinavian culture may be its focus on the wellbeing of the group rather than of the individual. While Americans admire even the most extreme efforts of individuals to achieve success, Scandinavians strive for moderation—in themselves, the community, and the workplace—to achieve a sense of balance. There are reasons why they always make the lists of the “happiest people on earth”. Scandinavians attribute it to their focus on life/work balance—while they do pay high taxes, the generous social programs they get in return take all the fear out of losing their livelihood or growing broke. This allows them to focus on enjoying life. Scandinavia's concern for group wellbeing expresses itself in a variety of ways. The Danes have the centuries-old concept of “hygge,” which is a general state of mind that embraces life.

The Finns have their saunas, whose bonding rituals are intertwined in national culture. And the Swedes consider “fika,” a type of mandatory coffee hour, to be an essential part of each day in order to bond with friends and colleagues.

Workplace culture is far less stressful in Scandinavian countries, too. Everyone expects everyone else to perform to the same standard. Since it’s a common practice among Scandinavians to say what they mean, no one has to search for hidden meanings. And dealing with fewer office politics makes for a far more relaxed and comfortable workplace environment. Scandinavian culture discourages those seen as aiming too high or being too ambitious. In an attempt to make society as homogenous as possible, measures like private schools using the same curriculum as public schools are put in place to ensure equal opportunities for all. And Scandinavians believe that wealth should have no bearing on how you are treated.

Scandinavians love the outdoors and take full advantage of the breathtaking beauty of their landscapes by escaping into nature and enjoying the solitude at every opportunity. Come to think of it, no wonder they’re so happy.

Laundry Service

Laundry service is available through your hotels, although it is expensive. Your Program Director will help you make arrangements for these services if you need them.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

In both Norway and Finland smoking is prohibited in public areas and restaurants.

Hotels

With an emphasis on minimalism and functional design, you’ll discover that hotel rooms in this region are traditionally much smaller than in the United States, and tend to feature a sleek, modern look. Rooms are comfortable, clean, and well-equipped, but you should expect to experience how locals make use of limited space, which may mean that the bathrooms are smaller, or the beds are closer together, than you’d find at home.

Finnish Cuisine

Finnish cuisine forgoes the fancy for simple, hearty, and comforting. The emphasis is on natural ingredients and fresh local produce, with fish and meat also playing a prominent role in traditional Finnish dishes—including pork, beef, elk and reindeer. The country is also known for its fresh-picked mushrooms and berries, such as bilberries and lingonberries, used in cooking and baking. Here are some dishes to try:

- **Ruisleipä:** Part of the Finnish diet for thousands of years, *ruisleipä* is a dense and dark rye bread using sourdough and Finnish yeast that can be enjoyed at any time of day. Varieties of this healthy and hearty staple include *reikäleipa*, meaning “bread with a hole,” *jälkiuunileipä*, a harder bread baked at a low temperature, and several dry and flat versions (like the popular Finn Crisps).

- **Karjalanpiirakka:** Originally from the Karelia region of eastern Finland, this tasty pastry with a rye crust is traditionally filled with rice porridge and topped with egg butter. *Karjalanpiirakka* are favorites for breakfast or anytime as a snack.
- **Kalakukko:** This fish pie from the Finnish region of Savonia is traditionally prepared using rye flour and filled with a small herring-like fish combined with a little pork and bacon.
- **Graavilohi:** A true Finn favorite, *graavilohi* is a Nordic specialty made from raw salmon cured in salt, sugar, and dill. Thinly sliced, it's often served as an appetizer with a dill sauce on bread or with boiled potatoes.
- **Mustikkapiirakka:** When you're looking for something sweet and delicious in the summer months, go for the "blueberry pie" — although it's actually made bilberries, the healthier Nordic cousin of blueberries.
- **Salmiakki:** You could also soothe your sweet tooth with some *salmiakki*, or salty licorice. This Finland favorite of black licorice with ammonium chloride added to give it a salty sourness, might be an acquired taste for some.

Danish Cuisine

Twenty years ago one might've described Danish food as peasant cooking—hearty, stick-to-your-ribs Viking fare that would get you through a long day of farming, fishing, or raiding. Today, Denmark is the epicenter of the New Nordic cuisine, a movement begun by Danish chefs René Redzepi and Claus Meyer, who helmed Copenhagen's Noma restaurant (considered the world's best) and influenced chefs everywhere with their philosophy that celebrates sustainable, locavore, and seasonal ingredients—many of which are foraged and were previously forgotten. It has inspired many cooks to revisit and refine some of the classics of Danish cuisine, like these:

- **Smørrebrød:** These best-known Danish delights are open-faced sandwiches built on a base of buttered *rugbrød*, a dense, dark rye bread. These are not random sandwiches, they are artfully composed, so the dish is colorful and the garnishes are complementary. Toppings might include *syltede sild* (pickled herring) with micro greens; shrimp and egg with dill; or roast beef with pickles, onions, and horseradish. A favorite is *dyrlægens natmad*, which translates as "veterinarian's midnight snack" and includes corned beef, sky (Danish meat aspic), and *leverpostej* (liver pâté) topped with slivered red onions, sprouts, and parsley or dill.
- **Stegt flæsk:** The national dish of Denmark. Crispy pork belly chunks served with boiled potatoes and parsley sauce.
- **Brændendekærlighed:** So many Danes have a "burning love" for bacon, they named this dish after this affliction. This dish is mashed potatoes topped with oven-roasted cubes of bacon, caramelized onions, and butter.
- **Forloren hare:** A Danish meatloaf made with ground pork, leeks, and egg. Bacon strips are woven around the loaf, which is then baked till it looks like an elegant brown basket.

- **Rødspættefilet:** A filet of plaice (a mild white fish) that is breaded and fried. It can be eaten as an entrée, or as the *stjernesked* (“shooting star”) of a *smørrebrød* topped with shrimp, lettuce and caviar from the Limfjord.
- **Tarteletter:** These are flaky pastry tartlets filled with chicken and asparagus in a creamy béchamel sauce.
- **Andesteg:** This dish is a holiday favorite. A roast duck stuffed with apples and prunes, then roasted until golden-brown and served with a sauce made with reserved duck fat, whiskey, and wine.
- **Wienerbrød:** For something sweet to go with your coffee (*bica*), order a Danish but call it by its proper name, *wienerbrød*, which means “Vienna bread” and is a more accurate reflection of its provenance. Even though Danes did not invent them, they love these flaky, croissant-like glazed pastries filled with cream or fruit.
- **Kransekake:** The cake that literally towers above them all. It’s a cone of concentric almond cake rings bound together with a white icing glaze, and sometimes decorated with berries or nuts. They are served at festive occasions (especially New Year’s), and the center of the tower might hold candies, chocolates, and even champagne or wine bottles.

Swedish Cuisine

Like other Scandinavian countries, cuisine in Sweden focuses on fresh ingredients and simple preparations—food without fuss. But that doesn’t mean it lacks personality as the spare approach lets the local fish and produce (like lingonberries) shine through. Some dishes to try are:

- **Kanelbullar:** Cinnamon buns with a sticky glaze. During holidays like Christmas, you may also see *saffransbullar* (saffron buns).
- **Toast skagen:** Shrimp, whitefish roe, Dijon mustard, mayo, and fresh dill on toasted bread served as an elegant appetizer or snack. Also popular as starter/snack is *gubbroa*, an open-faced egg salad sandwich with anchovies.
- **Smorgasbord:** Swedish buffet of meatballs, mini-sausages, salmon, pickled herring, and sides like *knackebrod* (crisp bread)
- **Gul artsoppa:** Yellow pea soup, a variant on split-pea soup
- **Kottbullar:** Swedish meatballs, cooked in a cream-based gravy
- **Princess cake:** If you watch *Great British Bakeoff*, you may remember the *prinsesstarta* challenge, where contestants had to bake this elaborate layer cake topped with a dome of whipped cream and a layer of green marzipan.

Helsinki in Brief

City Layout and Details

Established 450 years ago on the order of the Swedish King Vasa, Helsinki is a youngster of a city by European standards, and it's still the smallest in the world to host the Olympic Games. But its ideal location on lovely peninsulas that jut into the Baltic Sea, its compact size and efficient design, and its stunning architectural variety combine to make a city that is easy to explore on leisurely walks and that holds wonders around every corner.

The bustling Market Square, located on South Harbor, is the charming site of wooden stands and colorful awnings that springs to life every morning. Only a few blocks away is the Helsinki Cathedral, a distinctive landmark with its tall, green dome surrounded by four smaller domes, done in the neoclassical style. It was designed by Carl Ludvig Engel as the climax of his Senate Square layout, and is surrounded by other buildings designed by him.

Another reason for Helsinki's distinctive small-town ambience is the absence of high-rise buildings. No structure here stands more than 12 stories. Nestled near the harbor is the Esplanade, a broad expanse of trees and gardens in the middle of a boulevard that runs from Market Square west to the Swedish Theater. This is the beginning of Mannerheimintie, the city's main thoroughfare. With small shops, large department stores, churches, and outdoor cafes, Mannerheimintie is a visitor's delight. Alive with motion and color from the start of day, Helsinki is no less invigorating at night. The Esplanade was the 1999 winner of the Edison Award for excellence in lighting design, offering a stunning combination of architecture and illumination.

Equally vivid is the work of the internationally honored Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, whose genius sprouts in structures all over Helsinki, from the winged, white marble facade of Finlandia Hall to the cooper-clad curtains of the Academic Bookshop.

Local Transportation

You can purchase a one-day "Transportation Card," providing free travel on the city's buses, trams, metro, and local trains. You will receive further information on specific routes and times of operation during your trip. You may want to take a ride on the tram, which passes some of the principal sights of the city. If you want to hire a taxi, you can signal one from the street. Taxis have an illuminated yellow sign taksi/taxi. When the sign is lit, the taxi is vacant.

Stockholm in Brief

City Layout and Details

Stockholm is built on 14 islands in Lake Malaren, which marks the beginning of an archipelago of 24,000 islands, skerries, and islets stretching all the way to the Baltic Sea. Stockholm's major streets—Kungsgatan (the main shopping street), Birger Jarlsgatan, and Strandvagen (which leads to Djurgarden)—are on Norrmalm (north of the Old Town). Stureplan, which lies at the junction of the major avenues Kungsgatan and Birger Jarlsgatan, is the commercial hub of the city.

East of Stureplan rises Hotorget City, a landmark of modern urban planning, which includes five 18-story skyscrapers. Its main, traffic-free artery is Drottninggatan, a three-block shopper's promenade that eventually leads to Sergels Torg, with a modern sculpture in its center.

South of Sergels Torg, at Gustav Adolfs Torg, sits the Royal Opera House. A block east of the flaming torches of the opera house is the verdant north-to-south stretch of Kungsträdgården—part avenue, part public park—which serves as a popular gathering place for students and a resting stop for shoppers. From here it is a short walk to the Royal Dramatic Theater and the Royal Opera House, as well as two other city landmarks: the Grand Hotel and the National Museum.

Kungsholmen (King's Island) lies across a narrow canal from the rest of the city, and is the site of the elegant Stadshuset (City Hall). South of Gamla Stan (Old Town), and separated from it by a narrow but much-navigated stretch of water, is Södermalm, the southern district of Stockholm. Quieter than its northern counterpart, it's an important residential area with a distinctive flavor of its own. To the east of Gamla Stan, on a large and forested island completely surrounded by the complicated waterways of Stockholm, is Djurgården, part of Sweden's first city national park. This summer pleasure ground of Stockholm is also the site of many of its most popular attractions, including the Vasa Ship museum.

Dining, Evening Entertainment

The city's favorite spot for both indoor and outdoor evening events is Djurgården. Don't miss the nightclubs and jazz venues, some of which stay open until 3 or 4 in the morning, and which keep the city hopping.

All the major opera, theater, and concert seasons begin in the fall, except for special summer festival performances. Most of the major opera and theatrical performances are funded by the state, so ticket prices are reasonable.

Stockholm's restaurant scene began revitalizing some 15 years ago and continues to innovate. What was once a dull landscape of overpriced, uninspiring eateries is now a hotbed of culinary creativity: Stockholm's best chefs have stayed way ahead of the game. Increasingly, their talents are rubbing off on mid-price restaurants – and many of those mid-range restaurants now represent the best dining value in town. Recent trends have seen some of the city's better restaurants pick up on this and offer more set-priced tasting menus and increasing numbers of wine by the glass—making otherwise expensive restaurants relatively affordable. In terms of food, New Swedish is still tops, and chefs look to fine, seasonal, traditional ingredients, prepared with a modern twist. Many less-expensive restaurants offer traditional Swedish cooking. Among Swedish dishes, the best bets are wild game and fish, particularly salmon, and the smorgsbord buffet, which usually offers a good variety at a decent price. Reservations are generally necessary.

Local Transportation

All tunnelbana (T or T-bana), metro, and local trains, and buses in the city are run by Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (SL; www.sl.se). A Stockholm Card (available for varied time periods) covers travel on all SL trains and buses. SL Tourist Cards are primarily for transport, but also

give free entry to some attractions. Or, purchase individual coupons: the minimum fare is two coupons, and each additional zone costs another coupon (up to five coupons for four or five zones).

Tunnelbanna (T-Bana) Metro: The tunnelbana is the most efficient way around Stockholm. Lines converge on T-Centralen, and are connected by an underground walkway to Centralstationen. There are three main lines, numerous branches and more than 100 stations, making the major sites easy to get to. The blue line features a collection of modern art decorating the underground stations. Stations at other lines are also decorated.

Bus: The bus system contains a number of lines that make stops throughout the city, often servicing areas like the Djurgården neighborhood, which is out of the T-bana's reach. Some night buses run from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. and are a good alternative to taxis. Bus timetables and route maps are complicated but the system offers useful connections to suburban attractions.

Taxi: Readily available, but very expensive (rides from the airport usually start at around \$45; in town a 15-20 minute ride will be about \$25-\$30). Drivers are required to publish prices, and prices are not regulated. Make sure you know the fare before you get into the taxi.

Bicycle: In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Stockholm' can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.

Copenhagen in Brief

City Layout and Details

Old Copenhagen is defined as a rough square by Nørreport Station to the north, Rådhuspladsen (Town Hall Square) to the west, and Kongens Nytorv to the east.

Strøget is Europe's longest continuous pedestrians-only route. It runs east from Town Hall Square to Kongens Nytorv, and is composed of five interconnected streets: Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelskaftet, Amagertorv, and Østergade and roughly bisects Old Copenhagen. Strøget is a stroller's and shopper's heaven: lined with shops, bars, restaurants, and, in season, with sidewalk cafes it is a favorite of visitors and locals alike. On the Eastern end, Pistolstræde is a maze of galleries, restaurants, and boutiques, housed in restored 18th-century buildings.

Fiolstræde (Violet St.), closer to the western end of Stroget, offers antiques shops and bookshops and cuts through the university (Latin Quarter). At the end of Fiolstræde you can turn onto Rosengaarden where you'll find Kultorvet (Coal Square). Here you'll find join the third main pedestrian street, Købmagergade (Butcher St.) which runs gently south until it meets up with Strøget at the Amagertorv section.

At the eastern end of Strøget you approach Kongens Nytorv (King's Square), where you'll find the Royal Theater and Magasin, the largest department store in Copenhagen. Across the square you come to the beginning of Nyhavn, the former seamen's quarter that now features upscale restaurants, apartments, cafes, and boutiques.

Denmark's government is centered on the small island of Slotsholmen, which is connected to the center by eight different bridges. The island also features several museums, most notably Christiansborg Castle.

Entertainment

Free time? Try strolling the Strøget, a three quarter mile stretch of shops between Rådhuspladsen and Kongens Nytorv . If you get peckish or thirsty midway, you can hop over a street to the Vestergade, lined with historic buildings, restaurants, stores and bars for a little more variety. Nynhavn (New Harbor) is the place to be on a good day – outdoor cafes abound, and classic buildings overlook the classic ships that line the harbor front.

In summer, a visit to Tivoli Gardens is a must. Tivoli's twenty-one acres encompasses impressive structures (the Chinese Tower, the Glass Hall Theater, and the Pantomime Theater among them), flower beds, fountains and lovely landscaping. The park features 5 roller coasters, including one of the world's oldest wooden coasters, as well as other rides. Locals and visitors alike find the ambience and experience a repeatable pleasure. If you're not interested in the rides or the performances you can simply stroll, take in the view and people watch. (There is an entrance fee, but many of the events inside are included).

You'll find the nightlife in several neighborhoods, including Strøget and nearby areas; in Vesterbro, with its main street on Vesterbrogade just across from Tivoli Gardens; and on Istegade — home to some of the today's trendier bars and cafés. The area just off Kongens Nytorv on Gothersgade is another busy nightlife spot.

The famed jazz venues of Copenhagen are largely closed. Nightspots now cater to a wider range of music — from ballroom music to house, rap, and techno. Restaurants, cafés, bars, and clubs stay open after midnight, a few until 5 am.

Local Transportation

Copenhagen is sufficiently compact and inviting that most of your travel in the city should be as a result of a leisurely stroll. Many of the major sightseeing attractions are close to one another.

By Bus: Copenhagen's buses are an inexpensive way to get around a little further out, if necessary. Most buses leave from Rådhuspladsen. A basic ticket buys an hour of travel and unlimited transfers within the zone where you started your trip. For information, visit www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/planning/public-transport

Metro: Copenhagen's Metro is almost 20 years old, and it connects the east to west of the city with the center. It operates 24 hours a day, and Metro fares are integrated into Copenhagen's zonal system. A joint zone fare system works with Copenhagen Transport buses, State Railway, and the Metro. You have the option to purchase a *grundbillet* (base ticket), 10 tickets, or a 24-hour bus and train ticket which allows you to travel through nearly half of Zealand.

Discount Passes: The Copenhagen Card entitles you to free and unlimited travel by bus and rail throughout the metropolitan area (including North Zealand) and free admission to many sights and museums. The card is available for one day or three days.

Taxis: Watch for the FRI (free) sign or a green light when hailing a taxi. Be sure the taxis are metered. Tips are included in the meter price and many drivers speak English.

Bicycle: In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Copenhagen can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro – and bikes are popular with the residents. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your vacation. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. Grand Circle is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly. If the shop is outside the country, you should expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from the standards you are used to, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Finland

Handicrafts, jewelry, hand-woven ryijy rugs, furniture, glassware, ceramics, furs, and textiles are some of the world-renowned specialties.

Denmark

A showcase for world-famous Danish design and craftsmanship, Copenhagen seems to have been designed with shoppers in mind. The best buys are such luxury items as crystal, porcelain, silver, and furs. Look for offers and sales (tilbud or udsalg in Danish) and check antiques and secondhand shops for classics at cut-rate prices.

VAT: Although prices are inflated by a hefty 25% Value-Added Tax (Danes call it MOMS), non-European Union citizens can receive about an 18% refund. For more details and a list of all tax-free shops, ask at the tourist office for a copy of the Tax-Free Shopping Guide.

Sweden

Swedish artisans create wonderful handmade glass and crystal (including Orrefors), which will make collectors proud. Swedish designer jewelry is also popular. Other traditional arts and crafts of the region include hand painted wooden Dalecarlian (Dala) horses, Viking and troll figures. If you have a sweet tooth, try Marabou chocolate, or try Glogg – an alcoholic drink served hot.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Finland

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 130,558 square miles
- **Capital:** Helsinki
- **Geography:** Finland is heavily forested and contains thousands of lakes, numerous rivers, and extensive areas of marshland. Except for a small highland region in the extreme northwest, the country is a lowland less than 600 feet above sea level.
- **Languages:** Finnish, Swedish
- **Location:** Finland is bordered to the north and west by Norway and Sweden, and to the east by Russia.
- **Population:** 5,518,371 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Lutheran 72%, Orthodox 1.1%, other 1.6%, unspecified 25.3%
- **Time zones:** Finland is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, seven hours ahead of EST.

National Holidays: Finland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Finland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Midsummer. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 May Day

12/06 Independence Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Finland: A Brief History

While sharing many cultural traits with its Scandinavian neighbors, Finland's linguistic and historic roots differ than those of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway—which share a common root language and Viking heritage. Finland's early history began with settlements of nomadic Sami people, Tavastians, and others during the first millennium B.C. With Vikings choosing not to establish settlements here, Finland developed into an important center of trade during the Viking Age. But Finland's powerful neighbors, Sweden and Russia, would battle for centuries over regional dominance. While Finland was able to preserve its language, culture, and traditions, Sweden would end up ruling it from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. And after that, Russia ruled Finland from 1809 to 1917.

After the 1917 Russian Revolution, Finland declared its independence. But the new state was immediately drawn into a civil war between the social classes—with Bolshevik-leaning “Reds” (factory and farm workers) supported by the new Soviet Union on one side, and the “Whites” (property owners), supported by Imperial Germany, on the other. The Whites emerged victorious and installed a puppet king. After the defeat of Germany in World War I, Germany’s influence disappeared and Finland became a republic, electing its first president in 1919. Relations remained tense between Finland and Soviet Union.

Finland’s role during World War II made perfect sense to the Finns, but it can make everyone else’s head spin. At the war’s outbreak, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, expecting a quick victory. Instead, the Finns fought way above their weight while holding the Soviet army back and humiliating Stalin. The Finns were eventually worn down and ended up ceding some border lands to Stalin, but they preserved their independence and gained the admiration of the world, who viewed it as a tiny democratic nation almost defeating an aggressive bully nation. Known as the “Winter War” of 1939/40, the Finns would then find themselves the “Continuation War,” which began when Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941. Looking at it more as choosing between the lesser of two evils, the Finns allied themselves with Germany—primarily to gain back the territory they had just lost. But the Red Army was much stronger now, and after Germany’s surrender at Stalingrad, Finland entered secret negotiations with Moscow to leave the war. A treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1944 left Finland independent but included a demand that they immediately expel the 200,000 German troops in Finnish Lapland—which led to the “Lapland War,” Finland’s third stage of the war.

While Finland did ally with Hitler, they weren’t looked on as collaborators and refused demands to turn over Finnish Jews. Some say that Finland may have lost World War II, but they won the peace. Other countries bordering the Soviet Union weren’t so lucky, but Finland managed to maintain its autonomy, a democratic government, and market economy. It continued to walk a fine line between the two camps of the Cold War—refusing an American offer to participate in the Marshall plan, developing a trade relationship with the Soviet Union, yet all the while working toward becoming a member of the European Union.

As its war-ravaged agrarian economy transformed into technologically advanced market economy, Finland grew increasingly prosperous and stable. Membership in the EU became a reality in 1995. While the political systems in the Scandinavian neighbors of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are constitutional monarchies, Finland is a republic with a president and parliament system—and on international surveys about nations with the lowest level of political corruption, Finland is often right at the top.

Denmark

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 16,640 square miles
- **Capital:** Copenhagen
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy

- **Geography:** Denmark is the smallest of the Scandinavian countries (it’s about half the size of Maine). The country occupies the Jutland peninsula, a lowland area, where the highest elevation is only 565 feet above sea level. But that doesn’t mean that the country is entirely flat. Most of its terrain consists of folds, undulations, small, often steep hills, and long, low rises. There are also forests, rivers, lakes, and beaches, many of which are excellent for swimming, though the water may be too cold for some people.
- **Languages:** Danish, Faeroese, Greenlandic (an Inuit dialect), and a small German-speaking minority
- **Location:** Denmark consists of the peninsula of Jutland and a group of islands at the entrance to the Baltic Sea, between Sweden and Germany. The two largest islands are Sjaelland, site of Copenhagen, and Fyn. Denmark also has two self-governing dependencies—Greenland and the Faroe Islands.
- **Population:** 5,605,948 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Evangelical Lutheran 76%, Muslim 4%, other 16%
- **Time zone:** Denmark is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time. Daylight Saving Time is in effect in Denmark from the end of March until the end of September.

National Holidays: Denmark

In addition to the holidays listed below, Denmark celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Ascension Day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year’s Day

05/01 May Day/Labor Day

05/05 Liberation Day

06/05 Constitution Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 2nd Christmas Day

Denmark: A Brief History

About 10,000 years ago, the glacial ice sheets that covered northern Europe began to retreat, attracting huge herds of reindeer. These in turn attracted hunter-gatherers who arrived from southern and eastern Europe. As the climate further warmed, the reindeer migrated north, but the early Danes remained in this fertile land, establishing farming communities by 3000 BC.

By 1800 BC, these proto-Danes were trading weapons, jewelry, amber and furs with people as far away as Rome. They buried their dead in peat bogs and many of those bodies have been remarkably preserved. The first people identified as Danes came from Sweden around 500 AD. They had a written system of communication based on runes. (The symbol we now use for bluetooth devices is based on the runic signature of Harald Bluetooth, or Harald I, the Danish Viking who became king around 900 AD.)

The Viking Age began in 793 AD with the raid on Lindisfarne, an English island monastery. Sporadic raids had likely occurred before this, by Vikings from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. They were not unified and the Danish Vikings primarily raided northeastern England, which at the time was a collection of warring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Danish Vikings had established a large settlement in Kent by 850 AD, and as more Danish colonists arrived, all of northeastern England fell under their control. The exception was Wessex, which reached an agreement with the Danes granting Wessex sovereignty, while the rest of the region was ruled as the Danelaw.

The Danish King Harald Bluetooth converted to Christianity in 965 AD, possibly to appease the Franks at Denmark's door. Harald forcibly established the new religion, and elevated the status of the Christian clergy. But Christianity did not bring peace. The Danes continued to fight to maintain and expand their territory, conquering parts of Germany and Estonia. After the Viking Age ended in 1066, Denmark's power declined. In 1397, the Union of Kalmar united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway under a single monarch, with Denmark as the dominant power.

Beginning in the 16th century, Denmark and Sweden began a lengthy rivalry. In 1658, Sweden took the Danish regions of Skåne, Halland and Blekinge, which are still Sweden's southernmost provinces. In the ensuing century, Denmark suffered more defeats: in 1814, it had to cede Norway to Sweden. But there were important domestic gains. . . . As 19th-century Europe was swept by nationalist fervor and revolution, Denmark had already abolished serfdom and established universal public education. By the 1830s, social and agricultural reforms had boosted the economy; there was a peasant landowner class; and a free press. In 1849, a new constitution created a legislative democracy, ending the monarchy's previous absolute power.

Denmark remained neutral during World War I, and tried to do the same during World War II. It signed a non-aggression pact with the Third Reich. But Germany invaded in 1940, threatening to bomb Copenhagen. With only a small military, the Danish government yielded. The Nazis at first allowed the Danes some autonomy. But when it began pressuring officials to comply with anti-Semitic policies, the Danish government resigned in protest. The Nazis took over in earnest, and the resistance movement grew. Tipped off by a Nazi diplomat that Germany was about to deport Denmark's Jews to concentration camps, the Resistance and many citizens managed to evacuate 7,220 of Denmark's 7,800 Jews to safety in Sweden.

After Germany's defeat, Denmark joined the United Nations in 1945, and became a founding member of NATO in 1949. The latter half of the 20th century saw Denmark's emergence as a prosperous, stable social democracy with one of the world's highest standards of living. In 2000, Denmark voted by referendum not to adopt the euro. It is one of only 5 countries in the world that meets the UN goal for wealthy nations to provide 0.7% of its gross national income for international development assistance. In addition, Denmark has established Danida, Danish Development Assistance, to fight poverty and improve education in developing countries. The current Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, is the second woman and youngest person (at 44) to hold that office. She is the leader of the center-left Socialist Democratic Party.

Sweden

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 173,860 square miles
- **Capital:** Stockholm.
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy
- **Geography:** The countryside of Sweden slopes eastward and southward from the Kjolén Mountains along the Norwegian border, where the peak elevation is Kebnekaise at 6,965 feet in Lapland. In the north are mountains and many lakes. To the south and east are central lowlands and south of them are fertile areas of forest, valley, and plain. Along Sweden's rocky coast, chopped up by bays and inlets, are many islands, the largest of which are Gotland and Oland.
- **Languages:** Swedish
- **Location:** Sweden is situated on the Scandinavian Peninsula, between Norway and Finland. The north of Sweden falls within the Arctic Circle.
- **Population:** 9,960,487 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Lutheran 63%, other (includes Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and none) 17%
- **Time zones:** Sweden is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time.

National Holidays: Sweden

In addition to the holidays listed below, Sweden celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Ascension Day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 May Day

06/06 National Day

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Sweden: A Brief History

Sweden's history began at the end of the last Ice Age, when tribes from central Europe began settling in Sweden's southern regions and the ancestors of the Sami people coming from Siberia, settled in the north. By the 7th century AD, the Svea people would gain supremacy in the region

and their kingdom gave the country its name of Sweden. Like in Norway and Denmark, Sweden flourished and expanded through trade and colonization during the 300 years of the Viking Age, ending by the middle of the 11th century, a period that also saw Sweden converting to Christianity.

In the 13th century, the Swedes conquered Finland, but Russia would continue to battle Sweden for control of Finland. By 1323 Finland was firmly in Swedish hands and would remain a province of Sweden until 1809. In 1397, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were united under a single monarch by the Union of Kalmar. But with Denmark emerging as the dominant power, there was constant infighting between Sweden and Denmark, which came to a head in 1520 when Denmark invaded Sweden. Sweden would then leave the union that brought the three nations together resulting in the beginning of the Vasa Dynasty and the creation of the first true Swedish nation-state.

Remaining neutral during both World War I and II, Sweden would not have to rebuild from the ground up as many other European nations did. The ruling Social Democrats began implementing welfare protection measures, the economy grew steadily, and Swedes achieved a high standard of living. In the 1970s, Sweden's economy went into a decline, however, and wouldn't stabilize again until the late 1990s. Sweden joined the EU in 1995 and has seen steady improvements to its economy in recent years.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Scandinavia

A History of Scandinavia by T. K. Derry (History) Chronicles the history of each of the Scandinavian countries.

A History of the Vikings by Gwyn Jones (History) Before their defeat at Hastings in 1066, the Vikings' sphere of influence extended from Constantinople to America. Gwyn Jones brings their civilization alive in this portrait of the Viking adventures, based on surviving documents and archaeological finds. With black and white illustrations.

Smilla's Sense of Snow by Peter Hoeg (Mystery) A mystery that has achieved literary acclaim. It has become mandatory reading for many Scandinavian Studies programs at universities, and was the basis for the 1996 Oscar-nominated movie. Be warned: There are some racy and controversial scenes.

Finland

Seven Brothers by Aleksis Kivi (1870, Historical Fiction). A Finnish classic, *Seven Brothers* follows the lives of seven brothers in rural Finland during the nineteenth century.

The Unknown Soldier by Vaino Linna (1954, Fiction). A war novel narrating Finnish soldiers during the Continuation War of 1941-1944 between Finland and the Soviet Union, a war fought over nationalism and territory lost to the USSR in the Winter War the previous year.

The Year of the Hare by Arto Paasilinna (1975, Fiction). The adventures of journalist Kaarlo Vatanen only started when he nearly runs over a hare. After nursing the injured hare back to health, Vatanen decides to leave his old life, job and wife, behind for the open road and wacky hijinks.

Kalevala by Elias Lonnrot (1835, Folklore). *Kalevala* is a collection of 19th century epic poetry of Karelian and Finnish mythology, written down from its traditional oral stories. A national epic of Finland, the *Kalevala* tells the story of the Creation of the Earth, all the way to the integration of Christianity.

Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Coalition in World War II by Henrik Olai Lunde (2011, History). Following the bloody Winter War against Soviet Russia, where thousands died and Finland was forced to cede multiple territories to USSR rule, Finland teamed up with Nazi Germany in the Continuation War, from 1941 to 1944, in hopes of winning back their lost land.

Denmark

We, the Drowned by Carsten Jensen (2011, Fiction) An epic seafaring adventure that follows the inhabitants of the Danish town of Marstal from 1848 to World War II, when the men sail the world and the women who are left behind form a community. The book is long (600 plus pages) and deals frankly with war, violence, and cruelty. But it was a runaway international bestseller and lauded for its use of fantastical elements.

Iceland's Bell by Halldor Laxness (2003, Fiction) Nobel Laureate Halldor Laxness reinvents the traditional Icelandic saga and injects it with a modern sensibility and a satirical undercurrent that speaks to our age. The plot pits an impoverished Danish colony – Iceland in the 17th century – against the grand historical workings of Danish and Icelandic history. Three interconnected stories reveal the political and personal conflicts of the day in historical context.

On Tycho's Island: Tycho Brahe and his Assistants, 1570–1601 by John Robert Christianson (1999, Biography/History) Chiefly famed as an astronomer, this book offers a fuller vision of Tycho Brahe as Renaissance man and scientist. From his private island in Denmark, Brahe assembled and manipulated the artists, nobility and the intelligentsia of the age to create breakthroughs in astronomy, science and research.

Winter's Tales and ***Seven Gothic Tales*** by Isak Dinesen (1934, Stories) Best known for *Out Of Africa*, her memoir of 20 years running and living on a coffee plantation in Africa, Karen Blixen (pen name, Isak Dinesen) also wrote short tales based in her homeland, Denmark. *Winter's Tales* and *Seven Gothic Tales* are generally considered the high water marks of her shorter works.

The Complete Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen (Folklore) There are several different anthologies of these fairy tales, written by Denmark's famous poet, novelist, and writer of short stories. Considered a genius for his inventiveness and imagination, his works continue to captivate both children and adults.

Sweden

A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman (2014, Fiction). Funny and poignant, this first-time novel by Stockholm native Fredrik Backman about an old curmudgeon who regains a will to live when a young family moves in next door made best seller lists around the world.

The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson (2012, Fiction). A publishing sensation from another first time Swedish author, this one is the riotous exploits of a centenarian with a backstory better than Forrest Gump's who is desperate to avoid his 100th birthday party. And a sequel was just released: ***The Accidental Further Adventures of the 100-Year-Old Man***.

A Year in Lapland: Guest of the Reindeer Herders by Hugh Beach (2001, Culture) An American anthropologist's account of a year spent living with the Sami (Lapps) and learning in depth about their way of life. Though set among the Tuorpon Saami in the Jokkmokk District of northern Sweden, this detailed picture of Sami culture says much about the ways of these people across all their homeland in northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, and *The Girl who Kicked the Hornet's Nest by Stieg Larsson (Mystery) A huge hit when *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was first released in the U.S. in 2008, this series of mysteries set in Sweden became a worldwide phenomenon. Dark and gritty, they are reminiscent of old-time noir films. Sadly, Larsson died in 2004 shortly after delivering the manuscripts of all three books.

Suggested Films & Videos

Finland

The Winter War (1989, Drama) An excellent Finnish war film (original title *Talvisota*) that tells the story of the resistance of a platoon of Osttrobottnian Finns, when Russia attacked Finland in November of '39. The Finns fought hard against overwhelming odds, with meager supplies, and the movie faithfully presents their action in the forbidding snowy landscape.

The Unknown Soldier (1955, Drama) An adaptation of Väinö Linna's novel this is a story about the Continuation War between Finland and the Soviet Union, told from the view of ordinary Finnish soldiers. Gritty and realistic, the film remains the most successful film ever made in Finland, and more than half of Finland's population viewed it in theaters.

Elina: As If I Wasn't There (2002, Drama) In rural Sweden of the early 1950s, Elina returns to school again after an illness. From a Finnish-speaking minority, Elina has conflicts with her biased teacher, and finds consolation wandering on the dangerous marshlands while speaking with her dead father.

Pelikaanimies (2004, Fantasy) A pelican becomes a gawky young man who learns to speak, thanks to his talent for imitation. He befriends two children who—unlike adults—see that their new neighbor 'Mr Berd' is not a man but a bird in a suit. The Pelican Man lands a job at the opera and falls in love. When adults discover the truth, trouble starts in this unusual and charming film.

Mother of Mine (2005, War/Drama) Amidst the conflict of World War II, Eero, a Finnish boy, is sent to live with a Swedish foster family by his mother. Eero feels abandoned by his Swedish mother, but unwelcomed by his new foster mother. When Eero returns to Finland following the war, his feelings of abandonment and confusion intensify.

Denmark

The Danish Girl (2015, Drama) The Danish artist Einar Wegener (later known as Lili Elbe) was one of the first people to undergo sex reassignment surgery. This biopic depicts Elbe's early career and marriage to artist Gerda Gottlieb, and the Bohemian worlds of Copenhagen and Paris in the 20s and early 30s.

A Royal Affair (2012, Historical Drama) The mentally ill King Christian VII comes to rely on his friend and physician, Johann Struensee (Mads Mikkelsen), a radical Enlightenment thinker from Germany. So, too, does the lonely Queen Caroline (Alicia Vikander), who begins a passionate affair

with the doctor. The king learns of their liaison, but protects them, and makes Struensee a Royal Advisor who essentially rules in the king's name. But his reforms are cut short when plotting aristocrats use the affair and Struensee's foreign status to bring a tragic end to this true story.

Pele the Conqueror (1988, Drama) Directed by Billie August, this Danish-Swedish production won the 1989 Oscar for Best Foreign Film, and star Max von Sydow was nominated for Best Actor. It follows the early 19th-century widower Lasse, who emigrates with his 12-year old son Pelle to the Danish island of Bornholm in search of a better life. That is not what they find.

Babette's Feast (1988, Comedy) Set on the rugged coast of 19th century Denmark, this film is from a short story by Isak Dinesen. Two beautiful daughters grow up with a clergyman father, who preaches self-denial. After his death, the sisters uphold his inflexible practices until the arrival of a French refugee, Babette. She cooks and for them, and introduces them to the deep pleasure of a gourmet French meal. Winner of the 1987 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.

The Danish Solution (2003, Documentary) Filmmakers Karen Cantor and Camilla Kjaerulff , with Garrison Keillor narrating, reveal how the citizens of Denmark protected their Jewish population against Hitler's attempt to impose export his final solution into Denmark.

Sweden

My Life as a Dog (1985, Drama) The story of Ingemar, a 12-year-old Swedish boy sent to live with his childless aunt and uncle in a country village when his mother falls ill, resulting in a Swedish look at the adult world through a child's eyes. A lovely, sometimes intense coming of age story with rural Sweden as backdrop.

Smiles of a Summer Night (1955, Comedy) Ingmar Bergman's idea of a bedroom farce brought him international stardom. A melancholy comedy the film depicts the romantic entanglements of three 19th-century couples during a weekend at a country estate. It's also pure Bergman: sharp, serious, thoughtful, and sobering, though there's an undercurrent of humor that the venerable director of such serious film classics like *The Seventh Seal* is not particularly known for.

Useful Websites

Grand Circle Forum (tips from previous travelers)

www.gct.com/forum

Grand Circle Shop

www.grandcircleshop.com

Grand Circle Frequently Asked Questions

www.gct.com/faq

**International Health Information/CDC
(Centers for Disease Control)**

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)
www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App, Skype, or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

TripWhistle

Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more

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