

# Scandinavia

# Where Is Scandinavia?

Norwegian Sea



# Quick Facts About Norway

**Continent:** Europe

**Capital City:** Oslo

**Population:** 5.3 million (2020)

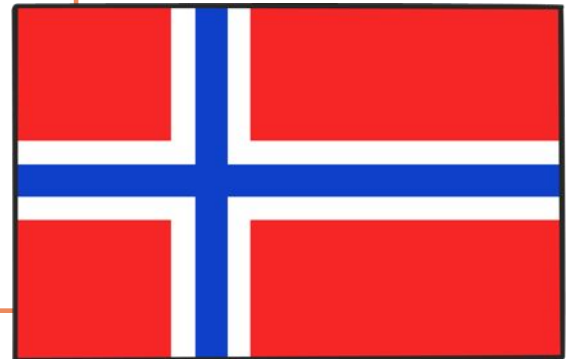
**Official Language:** Norwegian (Bokmal and Nynorsk are the two written standards of the Norwegian language)

**Currency:** Norwegian krone (NOK kr)

**Government:** a multi-party democracy in a parliamentary constitutional monarchy

**Main Religion:** Christianity

**Flag:**



# Quick Facts About Sweden

**Continent:** Europe

**Capital City:** Stockholm

**Population:** 10 million people (2021)

**Official Language:** Swedish

**Currency:** Swedish krona (SEK kr)

**Government:** parliamentary constitutional monarchy

**Main Religion:** Christianity

**Flag:**



# Quick Facts About Denmark

**Continent:** Europe

**Capital City:** Copenhagen

**Population:** 5.8 million people (2021)

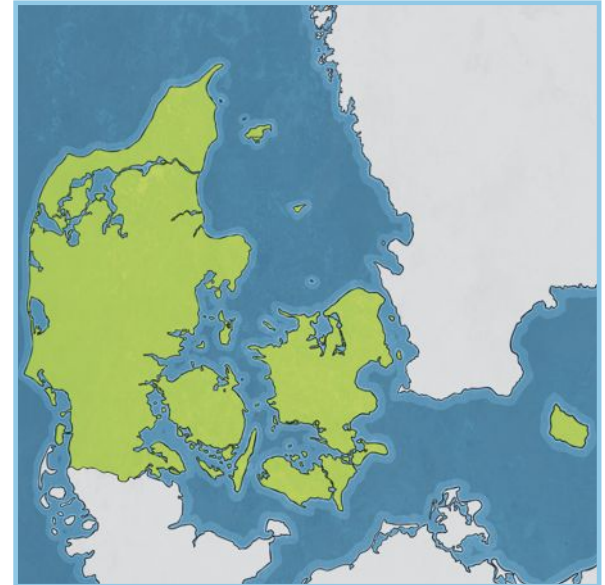
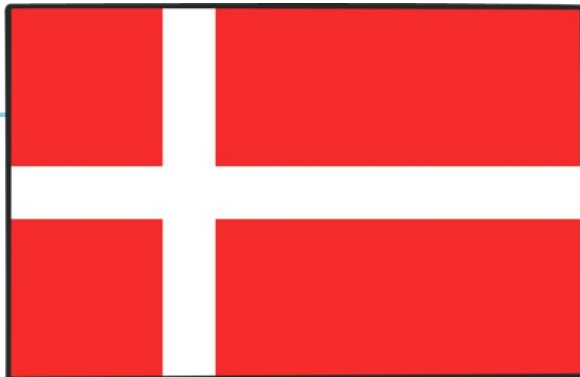
**Official Language:** Danish

**Currency:** Danish Krone (DKK kr)

**Government:** parliamentary monarchy

**Main Religion:** Christianity

**Flag:**

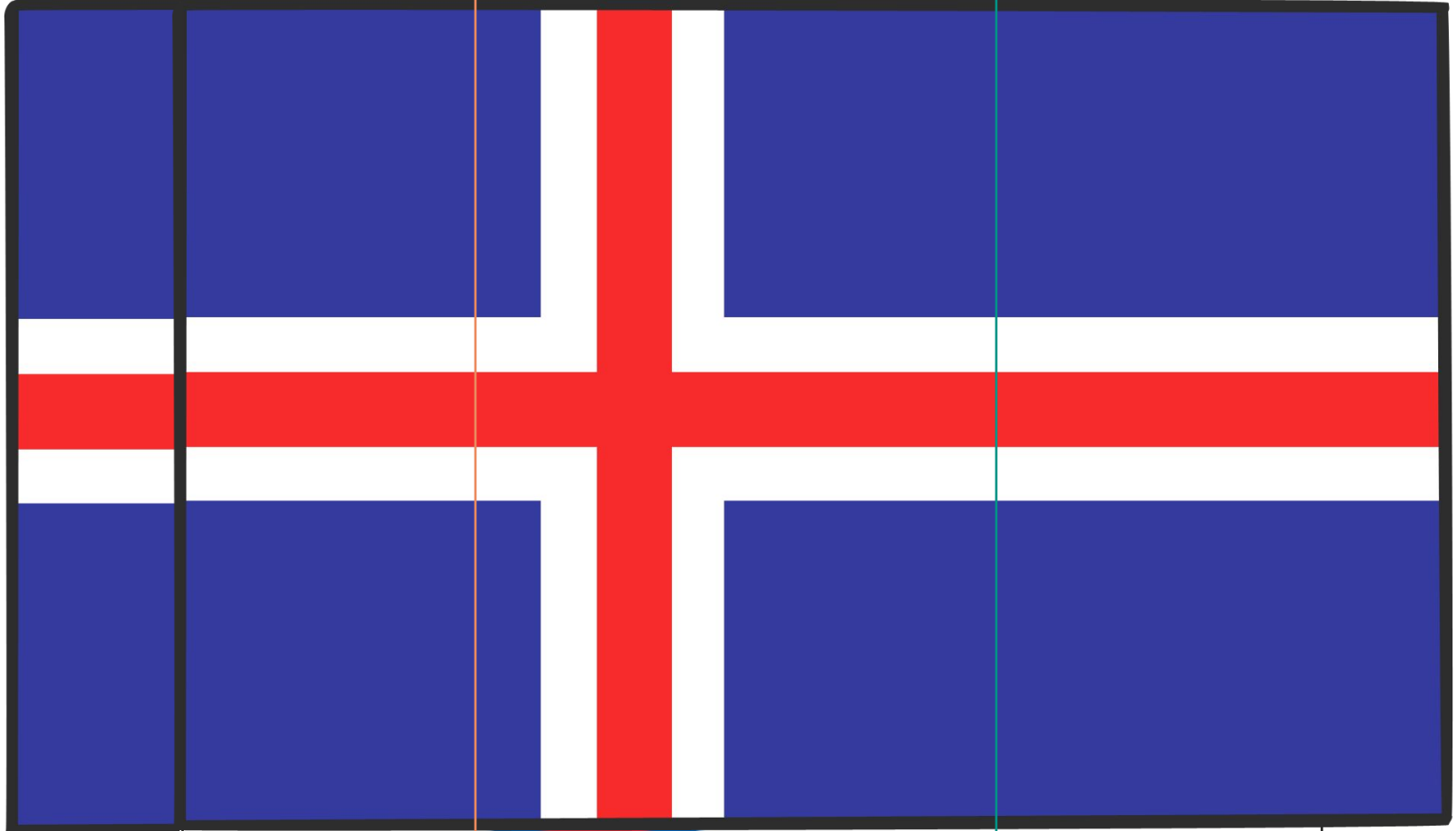


# Quick Facts about the other Nordic Countries

Iceland

The Faroe Islands

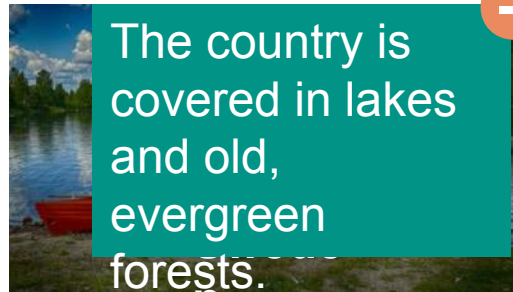
Finland



# Geographical Features

The countries of Scandinavia share a wild and varied landscape. The region is home to unique and harsh **physical features** carved out of the earth by immense glaciers, with collections of islands scattered around the coast.

Fjords are long, narrow inlets along the coast, formed by ancient glaciers.



The country is covered in lakes and old, evergreen forests.

The coastline plays an important role in Denmark. No place is more than 32 miles from the sea!

Known as the land of ice and fire, Iceland is simmering with geothermal activity, including giant waterfalls, boiling geysers and bubbling volcanoes.

The Faroe Islands is one of many archipelagos in Scandinavia, with a total of 18 islands making up the region.

# Scandinavian Ice Sheet



A glacier forms when fallen snow builds up over many years and **compresses** to form thick ice that moves incredibly slowly over time.



# Weather and Climate

Because the regions within Scandinavia are in different positions within Northern Europe, their weather and climate can vary.

- Overall, winter in Scandinavia means there will be snow. However, in the southern regions, snow is rarer as the temperatures are milder.
- Above the **Arctic Circle**, the most northern areas of Norway, Sweden and Finland experience a 'dark season'. This means that for weeks on end, inhabitants will not have any daylight hours. During this period, there is an increased chance of seeing the Aurora Borealis - the Northern Lights.

In Norway and Sweden, snowfall can last for months on end and temperatures may remain below freezing for several weeks.



Danish winters are much milder than those in Norway and Sweden. January and February are Denmark's coldest months with temperatures averaging 0°C.

# Weather and Climate

- Summer seasons are generally quite mild in Scandinavia depending on the area.
- In central Scandinavia, the air can feel humid in the warm sun.
- Oslo, Norway's capital city, can reach the temperature of 23°C in their hottest month, July.
- Some areas see temperatures soaring to 30°C but the average tends to hover between 15°C to 20°C.



# Wildlife

Across Scandinavia, the wild landscape is inhabited by a host of creatures adapted to the colder climate of northern Europe and the edges of the Arctic Circle.

Prowling predators like arctic foxes, wolves and lynx can be seen ranging across the frosted slopes hunting herds of **herbivores**, such as reindeer and moose.



# Wildlife

## Wolf

Wolves had been hunted to near extinction in Scandinavian regions but in the 1980s, wolves from Finland and Russia naturally migrated back to Sweden.

Today, there are several hundred roaming the wilds of southern and central Sweden. They are banned in northern Sweden because of the threat they pose to the herds of reindeer.



# Wildlife

## Arctic Fox

The northern species of fox has a snowy white fur coat to help it camouflage into its wintery mountain surroundings. This has not prevented Arctic Foxes from becoming an endangered species as their territories have been overrun by the more commonly known red fox. These red foxes are cousins of the Arctic Fox and are being hunted to provide the Arctic fox with a better chance at survival.



# Wildlife

## Moose

Hundreds of thousands of moose (or elk, as they are sometimes known) can be seen grazing in the forests and valleys of Scandinavia throughout the year. The white moose is incredibly rare and has a genetic condition which means its fur is white instead of brown and grey. There are only 100 known to be in existence and they live in the boreal forests that border Norway and Sweden.



# Wildlife

## Beavers

These are the largest species of rodent found in Sweden. They were once hunted to extinction in this country - not for their fur or meat but for their **gallbladder**, as it was used as a natural headache cure. Beavers have been brought from Norway to Sweden to help boost the population of the species.



# Traditions and Celebrations

**Scandinavia has many traditions - some dating to the days of pagan beliefs.**

Christmas is one of the most anticipated festivals in Scandinavia and, although the traditions alter between regions, there are many similarities. It aligns with the ancient pagan celebration of the winter solstice, the day with the shortest length of daylight in the year.

In Norway, decorations are hung in November, many of which are homemade. One tradition that is often seen is households placing sheaths of wheat on trees outside their homes. This is so the birds, just like people, are given a good meal at Christmas.

Most households will contain an evergreen tree. The holiday is Christmas Eve, when presents will be shared and traditional dishes will be eaten. Christmas Day itself is a day of traditions but most households use the time to visit family or go on a skiing holiday.





# Traditions and Celebrations

Midsummer is the largest non-religious festival that is celebrated in Scandinavia. It aligns with the pagan festivities of the summer solstice, which marks the longest day of the year. After this day, the days gradually shorten and darkness falls earlier.

The festival focuses on warmth and the triumph of light over darkness.

During the celebration, many people will flock outdoors where huge bonfires are lit and people enjoy dancing and feasts.



# Values

The countries of Scandinavia and the Nordic countries are alike in many ways:

- similar flags
- similar languages
- standards of living
- high tax rates

One other aspect that these countries have in common is the value of closeness and cosiness they create in their lifestyle. The word 'hygge', thought by many to have originated from an old Norwegian term, means wellbeing. The word can be pronounced in different ways - one is "hoo-ga" and describes the appreciation for a wholesome, peaceful environment.

The art of hygge is particularly popular in Denmark. Although it is practised differently across Scandinavia and other parts of the world, warmth, candlelight, friends and happiness are commonly linked to the concept. It is also used as a trendy style for clothing and decorating.



# Famous People

Scandinavia is home to many famous people. Some of these celebrities have made an incredible impact around the world. Here are just a few examples:

**ABBA** a Scandinavian group formed in the late 1960s with four band members. Their songs regularly reached the top of the charts and are still popular around the world today, including the singles, 'Mamma Mia' and 'Waterloo'.

**Greta Thunberg**

she is an environmental activist who became aware of the issues involving climate change at 8 years old. She began campaigning to make lawmakers more aware of changes that needed to be made. She was a teenager when she sparked the Fridays for Future protest, which inspired children around the world to participate in strikes. She has toured the world inspiring thousands of people to protest for greater changes to be made by world leaders and governments in the fight to protect the world during the climate change crisis.



# Famous People

## Bjorn Borg

said to be one of the greatest tennis players of all time, Borg was born in Stockholm, Sweden. He is one of two men to have won the tennis competition, Wimbledon, five years in a row. He also won the French Open tennis competition six times.

## Alfred Nobel

The Swedish inventor was born in Stockholm in 1833. He used much of his own fortune to create the esteemed Nobel Prize, granted to people for their intellectual achievements.



# Quiz

1. Which continent is Scandinavia located in? **(Northern) Europe**
2. Which are the three countries commonly referred to Scandinavia? **Norway, Sweden, Denmark**
3. What is the capital of Norway? **Oslo**
4. What is the official language of Sweden? **Swedish**
5. Which countries (other than Denmark, Norway and Sweden) are considered to be the Nordic Countries? **Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands**
6. How would you describe Scandinavia's climate? **Freezing, snowy winters and warm summers. There is a dark season for areas in the Arctic Circle during the winter months.**
7. What are some of the main geographical features of countries in Scandinavia? Can you name three? **akes, fjords, waterfalls, volcanoes, geysers, forests, glaciers, coastline, islands**
8. What is one of the main celebrations held in Scandinavia? **Christmas (winter solstice), Midsummer (summer solstice)**
9. Can you name any of the species of animal native to Scandinavia? **wolves, arctic foxes, moose, beavers**
10. How was Scandinavia's landscape formed? **The Scandinavian Ice Sheet (a glacier) moving across the continent.**

# Glossary

## **Arctic Circle:**

The Arctic Circle is a line of latitude that runs around the globe north of the equator. The regions within the Arctic Circle experience extreme weather conditions and freezing temperatures.

## **Continent:**

A continent is a mass of land where several countries are joined together. Earth has seven continents: Europe, Asia, Australasia, North America, South America, Africa and Antarctica.

## **compress:**

To flatten or squeeze by pressure.

## **Gall bladder:**

This is a small organ which holds bile until the body needs it to help digestion in the intestines.

## **herbivores:**

Mammals that eat a vegetarian diet, which means only plantlife. They have teeth which have evolved to grind plants, instead of tearing meat like carnivores (meat eaters).

## **physical features:**

This describes geographical features that are naturally formed rather than man-made. They include climate, vegetation, habitats and bodies of water.

