

Local - Kiruna

Information on Kiruna can be found at <http://kiruna.se>.

Geography

Kiruna, Sweden is located at 67.8 deg N latitude, 20.4 deg E longitude, about 200 km north of Arctic Circle. Kiruna is the northernmost municipality in Sweden, in the region referred to as Lapland, and the largest by area, covering 20,000 square kilometers (about half as large as Switzerland). The town of Kiruna is approximately 500 m above sea level, and has a population of about 25,000.

Weather

In January, the average daily temperature in Kiruna is about -14 C ($7\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$), and ranges from $+5\text{ C}$ to -30 C ($41\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ to $-22\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$), although temperatures at the airport and in the surrounding areas can be up to 20 degrees C colder. The polar night lasts from about December 10th to the 31st. In January, daylight ranges from around two to four hours.

Restaurants

A listing of local restaurants is available at the hotel, and will also be posted on the message board at Arena Arctica. In addition, the restaurant in the airport terminal (Takeoff Restaurant) offers daily lunch specials (both regular and vegetarian, also posted on the message board), plus a wide variety of a la carte menu items.

Recreation

There are a number of recreational activities available in and near Kiruna. These include snowmobile rides, dog sled rides, a tour of the Kiruna iron ore mine, cross-country and downhill skiing, road trips to Norway across Lapland, the Ice Hotel, and a wilderness camp. There is also a Winter Festival in January, and a film festival in February. In addition, the European Space Range (Esrange) balloon facility and the Swedish Institute of Space Physics (IRF) are located nearby. Please check the information available at the hangar for more details.

With some luck, you will be treated to the aurora borealis while you are in the area. One of the best locations for viewing the aurora is the turnoffs along the road between the airport and highway E-10. Pull off the road onto the turnoff, extinguish your headlights, and enjoy the show!

Sweden - General

Information on travel to Sweden can be found at: <http://www.gosweden.org>.

Documents Required

Passports are required of all U.S. citizens visiting Europe. U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter Sweden for stays of up to three months.

Language

The official language is Swedish, however, English is widely spoken by almost everyone. Sami is the indigenous language of Lapland, and is also spoken around Kiruna.

Money

The monetary unit in Sweden is the Krona. Coins come in denominations of 50 ore, 1, 5, 10 Krona (crowns). Bank notes come in denominations of 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000. The exchange rate as of October 15, 2002 is approximately 9.2 SEK to the U.S. dollar.

You can exchange currency and travelers checks at an exchange bureau or authorized banks. Exchange windows at airports, railway stations and hotels will exchange currency and travelers checks, but usually at a less favorable rate.

Credit Cards & ATMS

Charge cards are widely accepted throughout Sweden and generally offer a favorable exchange rate. ATMs will accept U.S. credit cards, including those issued by the Federal Government. You will receive your funds in SEK, so requesting an amount of 200 will yield 200 SEK (~\$21.74), not \$200.

Bank Hours

Normal banking hours are Monday through Friday from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm except for Thursday, which has additional hours of 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Time Difference

Sweden is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

Telephone and Mail

The country code for Sweden is 46. International direct dialing from Sweden is available. Making phone calls from your hotel room is usually quite expensive. Hotels almost always add a surcharge for making calls from your hotel room. Therefore, you should inquire about the rate your hotel charges before you make calls from your room.

Swedish "Telia" phone cards and all major credit cards can be used on pay phones. The Telia phone cards can be purchased in most kiosks, grocery stores, and restaurants.

Post offices are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm and on Saturday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Electricity

Sweden utilizes 220-volt, 50-cycle alternating current, rather than the 110-volt, 60-cycle alternating current used in the United States. If you take electrical devices from the U.S., you will need voltage transformers as well as plug adapters to be able to use them in Sweden.

Embassy

The U.S. Embassy in Sweden is located in Stockholm at Dag Hammarskjoldsvag 31, tel. (46)(8) 783-5300, fax (46)(8) 660-5879 and after-hours telephone (46)(8) 783-5310. The Embassy's internet website is <http://www.usemb.se>. U.S. citizens can use the website to register on-line. Normal hours for public visitors are Monday-Friday, 9:00 am to 11:00 am, except holidays. Routine passport and U.S. citizen service inquiries are handled by telephone (46)(8) 783-5375 Monday-Friday between 1:30 pm and 4:00 pm.