



The Dynamo



Shedding some light on Lund

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Studentlund secures future

Nations of Lund

For the first time in centuries, nation membership became optional this semester. To face this change, a single student membership for nations, student unions and the *Akademiska Föreningen* was born: *Studentlund*.

Official numbers released in October speak of 25,484 members, or 88% of students overall – a declared success. But how do people heading nations feel about it?

Oskar Weijden, *Pro Qurator Ekonomi* at Östgöta Nation, declares that *Studentlund* was “a very good idea, to keep Lund as a student city, to keep student culture alive in Lund”.

Sandra Johanne Selander, *Qurator* at Blekingska Nation, also approves: “We were interested in keeping the connection between unions and nations. Now we have a closer cooperation, a better idea of what other parts are doing.”

Gustav Henriksson, *Kurator* at Lunds nation, tells that nations’ worse worries about expected loss of members, especially due to so-called ‘hidden members’ (registered by obligation but not participating in nation life), were not realized. “Numbers are better than we’d feared. We have more active members now than last semester!”

(Continued on page 5)

Who are these people?

Statues of Lundagård

In *Lundagård*, near the AF castle and the main University building, carved faces look out over students and seasons, year after year. But who are they?



Anders Jahan Retzius, 1742- 1821

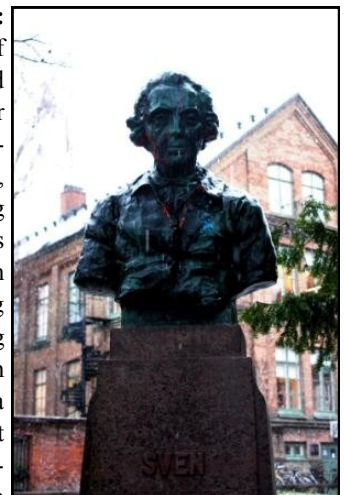
Who he was: Retzius specialized in natural history, chemistry, and entomology, helping to name and classify dozens of newly discovered species of insects during his tenure at Lund University. He was a favorite professor of natural history as he became increasingly practiced, eventually be-

ing inducted into the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1782.

Sven Lagerbring, 1707-1787

Who he was:

Professor of history and an inspector for Blekingska nation, Lagerbring changed his name from Svenbring after being knighted in 1769. First a student at Lund University and then academic secretary years later, Lagerbring is most noted for his work for the National Archives and his progressive research of Swedish history.



(Continued on page 6)

dynamolund.wordpress.com

The Dynamo is an independent initiative by students, for students. Our goal is to help non-Swedish speaking students in Lund have a better idea of what goes on around town.

lund.dynamo@gmail.com

Here's to your health!

Health care for Master's students

Swedes live long and healthy. The health care system in Sweden is universal, of high quality and often referred to as one of the global benchmarks.

Therefore, no international student in Sweden should be left without medical care.

Know your rights!

I've met students who mistakenly believed they were left out from the health care system. Not knowing any better, they felt helpless.

A number of students in my program did not receive their residence permit before September. They still decided to come to Sweden to start their classes on time, not wanting to miss their studies. However, not having a residence permit, and hence, a personal number (the Swedish identification number), some believed they could not access the Swedish health care system. They did not dare visit the doctor out of fear they'd have to pay a large bill.

For example, Rajiv*, a Master's student from India, came to study Public Health in Lund in September 2009. He finally got his residence permit and personal number in November 2009. During those first three months, Rajiv had some serious issues with his stomach.

He confessed: "Just because of the service being expensive and because of me not having a personal number, I did not take the chance to consult the medical facility in Sweden". Being a medical doctor, Rajiv

assumed he knew what was happening and what medication he needed, so his parents were able to ship him supplies from his home country.

Another case: Oscar* from Nigeria was also awaiting his papers to be ready. "I heard that there is no state resource I can use. I did not venture to seek any health care because I did not have a personal number. Luckily, I did not need to seek medical help".



Photo: Lydia Cardinal

When that apple a day is not enough to keep the doctor away, you need to know what to do!

These examples reflect a belief that the possibility of seeking subsidized health-care depends on the possession of a personal number. But this is a wrong assumption! Stressful situations could have been avoided if these students had known they were covered by insurance.

The answer's in STUDENT-IN

If you are officially admitted to a Master's program in Sweden, you are automatically covered by the STUDENT-IN insurance.

This insurance is provided by the university free of charge to all incoming international one-year or two-year Master's students from the first until the last day of their studies. This insurance applies 24 hours a day in Sweden. (If you travel outside the country this insurance does not cover you.)

STUDENT-IN covers all international Master's students independently of their current residence status. For example, if you are still waiting for your residence permit and/or *personnummer*, you are still allowed to use STUDENT-IN.

The program offers basic coverage for Master's students. It reimburses for medical help that cannot be deferred.

This extends to any medical care not related to chronic conditions or non-urgent medical checkups. In other words, if any emergency happens or you just feel sick, feel free to go to the doctor and ask for medical help.

You should then visit the doctor at any health center (*Vårdcentralen*) or hospital, pay the bill and make sure to keep the receipt. After that, visit the International Office to proceed with your reimbursement. Note that amounts of less than 200 SEK will not be repaid. (Max. compensation is 200,000 SEK.)

Already covered?

The vast majority of international students benefit from the same universal state health insurance as the Swedes, and so should not require STUDENT-IN.

If you are a citizen of the European Union (plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), you only need to obtain a European Health Insurance Card at the social insurance office in your home country.

But what if you come from outside the EU? If you are admitted to a program that lasts longer than one

year, you are entitled to apply for a *personnummer*, which helps open all the good doors in Sweden and allows a student to have the same health care access rights as the EU folks. A personal number can be sought at the local tax office (*Skatteverket*).

Insurance is often tricky and the devil might be in the details. Your specific situation might require you to consult the insurance contact person at the university.

But the important thing to remember: no matter what your situation, you should never be left without medical help. STUDENT-IN is how Lund University and Sweden's authorities help you feel safer no matter what your individual circumstances are.

To find a clinic, book an appointment or call emergency:

Skåne county website (www.skane.se, click on International) or LU website (www.lunduniversity.lu.se, click on Current Students/Student Health/Medical Help).

If you are an international student in Lund but not a Master's student, or for more information about STUDENT-IN, call or visit the International Office. Contact person for insurance issues: Annike Hemmingsson, 046-222-7118; Annike.Hemmingsson@pers.lu.se.

*Names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

Useful tips for budget or no-cost health care

Dental care: In need of dental care and unable to pay full costs? Try contacting the Dental School in Malmö (*Tandvårdshögskolan*) at 040-665 84 76 or visit them at Carl Gustafs Väg 34, Malmö. Under the supervision of accredited dentists, dentistry students provide dental care at a reduced cost.

Student Health Care Centre: A service for students at LU, it employs nurses, counselors, a psychiatrist, a physician and a psychologist. Support for concerns related to studies, such as stress, or other issues that affect scholastic abilities. Appointment required. Consultations are confidential and the visit costs 60 SEK. Call Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 13.00 to 15.00 at 046 - 222 43 77.

Sexual health and birth control: You can get tested for sexually transmitted infections, get a prescription for birth control pills or see a midwife. Services free of charge. Lund STI Clinic, University Hospital *Hudhuser* building, Lasarettsgatan 15, Lund. Tel. 046 17 1165. Mon-Fri, 09:00-12:00/13:30-16:00.

Concerts to warm the heart and toes *Live music*

Old man winter has hit not-so-sunny Southern Sweden but that doesn't mean you can't stay warm this winter. Malmö and Lund have some concerts that will help shake the snow off your galoshes.

Oskar Linnros (SE) – Swedish alternative musician and rapper. Dec. 3, 19:00-23:00; 250 SEK at the door; Babel (Spongatan 38), Malmö.

Silver Columns (U.K.) – 80's electro-pop vibe with comparisons to Four Tet and Hot Chip. Dec. 3, 23:00; free admission before 22:00 and 90 SEK after; Debaser, Malmö.

Dj Worthy, Woo Banger & The Boom Bap (SE) – Club Night (House and Old School Hip-Hop). Dec. 3, 23:00; 60 SEK before midnight and 100 SEK after; Babel, Malmö.

The Twelve + Jamaica (Brazil) – Electro DJ's who have worked with MIA and a-ha. Dec. 4, 22:30; free entrance before 22:00

then 90 SEK at the door; Debaser, Malmö.

Tover Styrke (SE) – Swedish alternative singer who's worked with Lykke Li and Robyn. Dec. 8, 20:30; free entrance before 22:00 then it's 50 SEK at the door; Debaser, Malmö.

Halloween (DE) – German Power Metal. Dec. 8, 20:00; 380 SEK; Mejeriet, Lund.

Small Black (U.S.) – Brooklyn electro-pop in league with Beach House and Washed Out. Dec. 9, 21:00; 90 SEK; Debaser (Freaks 'n' Geeks), Malmö.

Graveyard + Riddarna (SE) – Gothenburg hard rock band reminiscent of Black Sabbath. Dec. 10, 22:30; free entrance before 22:00 and 90 SEK after; Debaser (It's a Trap), Malmö.

Best Coast (U.S.) – California band influenced by the Beach Boys but sound like

Pavement and Stephn Malkmus. Dec. 15, 21:30; 90 SEK; Debaser (Freaks 'n' Geeks), Malmö.

The Radio Dept. (SE) – Lund indie pop natives and a personal favourite. Dec. 15, 21:00; 200 SEK; Mejeriet, Lund.

Pop & Soul Dance Night (SE) – DJ's Stu and Björn. Dec. 16, 22:00; free entrance; Debaser (Hang the DJ), Malmö.

Last Days of April (SE) – Alternative Swedish Rock. Jan. 22, 22:30; free admission before 22:00 and 90 SEK after; Debaser, Malmö.

For more information, check out debaser.se, kulturmejeriet.se, kulturbo-laget.se and babelmalmo.se.

Don't forget to check nations' calendars and posters around town, too – there's music to be found!

Alexander Titkov



is for Kalmar Nation

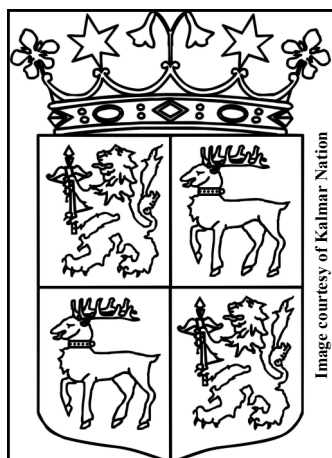
Thanks to Götiska nationen together with Östgöta and Västgöta nations.
Lina Hevdall,
Kurator at **What international students can do in your nation:** Everything! But we also have special events that are directed to international students, for example Swedish cooking nights, trips (like to a Christmas market), Christmas crafts and a lot of other stuff. But mainly international students participate in all our activities, being *förmän* (section bosses), volunteering in our sections, or just hanging out with us.

When were you founded and why: We were founded in 1696 to gather all the students in Lund coming from the Kalmar region.

What is the pride of your nation: Our ball, *Storaste Kroppkakan*, which takes place every other year. The ball has taken place since 1897 and the next time will be the 5th of March 2011.

What is your nation's symbol and why: On our crest, the lions represent Småland while the deers represent Öland. The deers have necklaces to represent that they are the King's property.

Can you name a special event in your history: During the late 18th and the beginning of the 19th century we were a part of



Christmas party the 11th of December, with a traditional Swedish *julbord*. Next semester as I said before there's our ball, but also the *novisch* period where we have a lot of activities every week.

The Nations of Lund – From A to Ö

What is your best beer: Hard to say, our assortment changes every week! Right now we have a Samuel Adams honey porter that I really like (maybe because it is quite sweet).

Do you offer meals and if so how much: We offer meals four times a week: Monday, sirloin steak for 50 SEK at Biffen; Tuesday, we offer different kinds of food every week for 30 SEK at Pub Piraya; Friday, there's homemade hamburgers or fish & chips for 40 SEK at Kaggen; Saturday, there's the brunch for 40 SEK at Café Kat-trumpan!

What is your best weekly event: Our Kaggen pub on Fridays, where you get a great hamburger or fish & chips. Everything is made from scratch! And while eating, have a cold beer and listen to live music.

Where are you located: At Biskopsgatan 12, at the end of Sölvegatan, not far from the AF building and SOL center.

Website: www.kalmarnation.nu.

Missed the start of the alphabet? It's all at dynamo.wordpress.com/

The lowdown on Lomma

Travel

A popular summer destination like Lomma quiets down significantly as the seasons change.

The harbour, which is capable of holding two hundred boats, houses only a few dozen, the ice cream kiosks have long since been boarded up, and I would no longer advise testing the shallow waters of Lomma Beach.

While many summer activities, such as windsurfing, will have to wait until next June, Lomma is still worth a visit. (If swimming is what one desires, however, the Lomma Kommun recommends visiting the indoor swimming pool of *Pilängsbadet*.)

Easy access

This market town turned suburb is only a twenty minute bus ride from Lund via Bus 139. The trip is 29 SEK each way, with buses leaving twice every hour. If you don't want to pay or to wait, need some exercise and care to brave the weather – it's also a beautiful bike ride. The cycling route leads one through the countryside and along the freeway. The map is available online, and the path is generally well marked along the way.



Boats take a rest over the cold season.



Lomma Beach is pretty and pretty quiet this time of year.

Surrounded by sea

Upon arrival to the Lomma Harbour area, the public library is readily visible. The library was designed to structurally reflect it's port surroundings, and sits on the bank of the Høje River.

Inside, one can find a number of brochures dedicated to Lomma Municipality. These brochures cover information focusing on generality, flora and fauna, as well as recommended walks and events.

Though many are in Swedish, some information is provided in English. The rear of the library provides a nice (warm) view of the river. Beside the Library, and in the same architectural style, is one of Lomma's many cafés.

Warm up your insides

Cafés near the waterside are a great place to find respite from the cold, while still enjoying the Sound. A varied cuisine is offered. Fish, pizza, pastries, espresso – one can find it all.

The waterside, however, is what one has to enjoy in Lomma. While the summer sun won't be there to keep one warm, there are pea coats for that. Walking along the harbour is a relaxing trek.

Life by the water

Fisherman are still fishing, boaters are still boating, sea birds are still in the air – and certainly there will be others wandering the same stretch. Views of Öresund coast are vivid, with Malmö's Turning Torso as well as the Öresund Bridge off in the distance.

Lomma Beach, located just north of the harbour, is a nice continuation of this walk. Known for it's shallow waters, the beach is nearly empty and covered in sea-



You can have the Öresund almost to yourself.

weed and shells this time of year. Due to the low temperatures, however, the seaweed doesn't give off a putrid smell as it does in the heat. Rather saltiness, due to the brackish water, can be smelled.

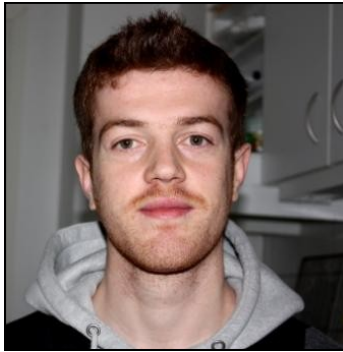
Lomma is just a skip, hop and a jump away from Lund as well as a beautiful reminder of warmer days, and a peaceful getaway from the academics and daily life. Easily explorable in a few hours – it'll be dark by afternoon, anyway.

Find more travel suggestions at
dynamolund.wordpress.com/

Text and Photos: Teddi N. Constantine

We asked: “What nation did you join & why? Are you satisfied, and why or why not?”

Vox Pop



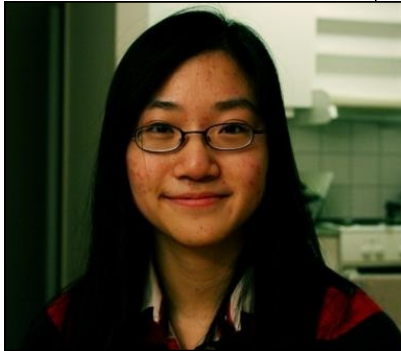
Matteo Pochintesta - Italy; studies architecture
Nation: Helsingkrona

“I joined this nation because a lot of my friends decided to join this nation also and it is the closest nation to where I live. I am satisfied because I enjoy the night club and the weekend brunch is very good!”



Melissa Miller - Australia; studies environmental and social science
Nation: Hallands

“I heard it had a good club and was exchange student friendly. I have enjoyed being a member because it has been a lot of fun to work at the night clubs.”



Hayley Kim - Canada; studies biology
Nation: Krischansta

“I visited and it had a really nice atmosphere. It is a smaller nation so it seemed it would be easy to make friends. I could be more satisfied because it has been difficult to get involved because I am an international student and don’t speak Swedish. I haven’t been contacted about events or opportunities very often.”

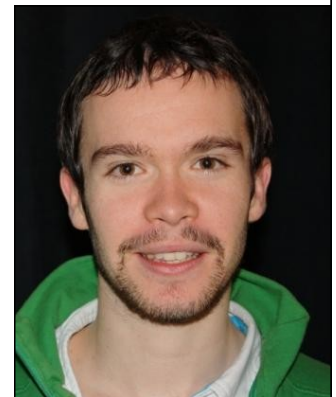
Rob Candy - England; studies business management
Nation: Lunds Nation

“I joined to become immersed in Swedish culture and meet Swedish students and not just international students. I also wanted to broaden my work experience. I am pretty satisfied with my choice because the perks of working at the nation are great and I enjoy interacting with other people.”

Alicia Donnellan - Spain; studies biology

Nation: Sydsksanska

“I was attracted to the different kinds of music events they have going on and it is smaller and cozier than some other nations. The parties and music are good and I also enjoy the cinema café; I think I made the best decision I could have.”



Pictures and comments taken by Lydia Cardinal

Studentlund: “we offer something most people want”

(Continued from page 1)

Blekingeska’s Selander informs that her nation has more members in total now than last term, and “there’s still people dropping by to join. This is a difference from before: when you needed a nation card to write exams, we would get everyone in the first 5 weeks! All nations have gained members since the last official numbers were released.”

The ÖG PQE admits ‘hidden members’ were a worry at his nation, but not all hope was lost: “We’d never tried non-mandatory membership, so everyone had fears. But we understood as well that what we offer is something that most people want.”

The rule changes have meant rethinking

how nations present themselves: “It’s hard to identify the students who didn’t join; that’s something we want to do. Is it foreign students, distance education students, students with families? We want to reach out to everyone so they feel included,” attests Selander.

Weijden explains broad appeal is also part of ÖG’s approach: “We offer more than just nightclubs. We’re developing a lot more now: we want to be able to attract all types of students in Lund.”

“We have to evaluate and take things more seriously. The biggest problem is that if a nation has a down period, it will be hard to come back, there’s no longer the security guaranteed by mandatory membership,” says Henriksson. “It’s very important to invest in the future,” he explains - through

housing, clubs, marketing, etc.

“The best investment”

All agree that no matter what nation gets picked, joining *Studentlund* is essential to “get the full Lund experience. That’s the main reason people come to Lund. It is a very well-ranked university and all, but the main reputation is as a student-friendly town,” asserts Selander.

“It’s a small cost and you get a lot back. If you want to get involved it’s very easy, and then you get even more back. It’s the best investment you can make as an international student,” claims Henriksson.

Weijden puts it plainly: “There’s not much to do in Lund otherwise! Everything fun in Lund is connected to *Studentlund*.”

Ariane Senécal

Statues of Lundagård: LU history carved in bronze

(Continued from page 1)

Otto Lindblad, 1809-1864



Who he was: Most famous for his composition of the score of the Swedish Royal Anthem, Otto Lindblad was an accomplished composer that focused much of his time

after studying at Lund University pursuing music. Later, he spent some time touring Sweden with the Lund Quartet, and founded the Lund Student Singers in 1830, which still exists today.

Kilian Stobaeus Elder, 1690-1742



Who he was: Stobaeus' family is one of the oldest families to have a continuing relationship with Lund University. He was a professor of natural history,

becoming the first person in Sweden to receive a doctorate in medicine. Stobaeus also later become a great influence on Carl von Linné – famous entomologist of Sweden – both as a professor and father figure.

Esaias Tegnér, 1782-1846



Who he was: Widely regarded as the founding father of modern poetry in Sweden, Tegnér is renowned for his composition of the epic poem "Frithiof's Saga", completed in 1825.

At the time, the poem was so important that it is said to have been translated at least once into every European language.

After becoming famous from this poem, he left his post as a Greek lecturer at Lund University and became a bishop at the palace in Växjö.

Text and Photos: Lydia Cardinal



The wealth of nations

Editorial

This was the first semester in Lund that mandatory membership to nations was abolished. Was it a good move? How will nations survive with this decrease in revenues?

On the one hand, we salute this gesture. To be forced to join a nation to obtain your grades is undemocratic. Nations have nothing to do with your academic performance.

Paying fees to the union seems more logical, although for the services they render, union fees seem a little high. And ask International students why they pay these fees, few will be able to answer. So there's work to be done here in terms of educating students on the usefulness of unions.

But on the other hand, nations are a wonderful and unique way of enriching student life and they need to be preserved.

The question then is, how do you convince all students to join nations?

In terms of international students, a certain percentage does not go to nations. They have given up on trying to meet Swedes (or have had bad experiences), they do not drink, they are not into sports... Nations do not bring them anything and this is something nations should work on. Perhaps converting their common space into libraries, cafés or international dinners/gatherings/language cafés on some occasions could help convince those students to become members?

Then again, there are students who were told that nations were something special in Lund, but who are then rarely seen there after they've paid their membership.

Those students need to be better informed as to which nation is best for them and need to be welcomed and guided as to how

they can get involved. Else, they may not renew their membership.

Volunteering at nations is a great experience, but sometimes one needs persistence to be able to actually get phone calls and eventually feel comfortable at a nation. Perhaps that process would need to be improved, maybe with the introduction of volunteer coordinators?

Although their worse fears were not realized, nations are generally facing budget reductions following this semester's change in membership rules. Help was offered by the university, but they are still seeking finding ways to ensure their future.

We wish all nations good luck, and hope students will want to keep them alive – in all senses of the term. The last thing we want to see is nations disappearing from Lund.

Easy and tasty pizza dough

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 package of yeast
- 1 cup of warm water
- 2 cups of bread flour
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 2 teaspoons of sugar

Instructions:

1. In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water for about 10 minutes until it becomes creamy.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the flour, olive oil, salt, sugar and add in the yeast mixture. Stir well.



Photo: Lydia Cardinal

3. Cover the dough and let it rise (place in the oven under the lowest heat) until it becomes double in volume, for about 30 minutes.

4. Preheat oven to 175 C.

5. When dough is ready, place the dough on a well floured surface. Form it into a ball and roll the dough out to the desired shape.

If a pizza is desired, purchase a cheap jar of pasta sauce, shredded cheese and desired vegetables and/or meat.

Spread ingredients onto the dough and place in the oven for about 20 minutes or until golden brown. Enjoy!

Alexander Titkov

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university buildings and libraries,
cafés, book shops and at
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BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

We welcome the
participation of all
students, whatever your
talents!

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Food for winter

Nutrition

Winter has already started taking its lease of the year in Lund. And it's time to ponder on flavorsome as well as healthy eating for a rapid warm-up during these cold and murky days to follow. Here are some tips for formulating tempting dishes and staying in comfort.

Healthy high-carb food

Perhaps winter is the ideal time to listen to your food cravings. Less sunny hours cause your body to demand more of carbohydrate-rich foods. However, be wise and selective with carbohydrates. One option is to have an extra serving of whole grains and the other easy option is to get back to your roots. Yes, there are lots of roots vegetables that can come in handy for a high energy winter dish.

Parsnips (*palsternacka*) can be yummy either roasted, or boiled and mashed. The younger turnips (*majrova*) could be steamed until tender and grated into a delicious salad, or could simply be boiled when older. Why not try a turnip mash with other roots too?

Diced swede or rutabaga (*kålrot*) could be an alternative for potatoes to prepare a mouth-watering casserole. Celeriac (*rotselleri*) tastes almost the same as celery (*selleri*) and boiled and mashed celeriac makes an ideal combination with fish and meat. Boiled, baked or fried cassava roots can also be as nourishing as potatoes. It's also the time to add some extra carrot to your dishes to see better despite the winter darkness. A sweet potato (*sötpotatis*) dessert such as sweet

potato pie could be a perfect way to end a meal, with a winter treat.

Seasonal fruits and veggies

Beetroot (*rödbetor*) can add color as well as flavor to the season. The same goes for radish (*rädisa*). Both can be eaten raw and can add flavor to stews, curries and casseroles. Pumpkins and squashes are good choices owing to their high carotene content. Seasonal fruits such as cranberries (*tranbär*), a variety of citrus fruits including oranges, and purple grapes can ensure an adequate supply of vitamin C.

Yogurt could be the savior

Fight back with yoghurt against the common winter colds! This is clearly a promising perk for yogurt lovers. Yogurts contain some 'friendly' bacteria that will boost your immunity during the cold episodes. So keep on eating them!

Last but not least, in addition to eating all these winter food, don't forget to keep your body well hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

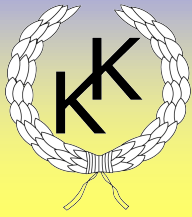


Photo: Nino Barbieri

Squashes and other winter vegetables help keep you healthy when the temperature drops.

Chathudina Janitha Liyanage

The Dynamo is an independent initiative for and by international students, printed with material support from Kuratorskollegiet.



English-Swedish Mini-dictionary

Sorry my Swedish is not that great: Ursäkta, min svenska är inte så bra.

Oh yeah I have Swedish courses: Jo, jag går svenskakurser.

My teacher is from Stockholm: Min lärare är från Stockholm.

Can you talk slower?: Kan du prata långsammare?

Sure, let's use English: Visst, vi kan prata engelska.

Where is the product you are advertising?:

Var finns produkten som ni gör reklam för?

No more, huh?: Jaså, är de slut?

When will you have more?: När får ni in fler?

You don't know: Du vet inte, nä.

Ok. Nobody here knows: Ok. Ingen här som vet.

Helpful: Vilken bra hjälp.

Revision: Rasmus Persson

“Dear Luke”: Questions and Answers

Q: Dear Luke,

I thought Swedes were kind people but the other day I heard someone calling someone else a “hell slut”. What happened?!

-Lite, Paul

A: Dear Paul,

I'm pretty sure that person was not calling anyone names, but instead just informing they were “all out” of some product – that's what *‘helt slut’* means. Really, check our little dictionary above!

-Luke

Q: Dear Luke,

I bought a Ryanair ticket flying from Stockholm for 56 SEK, but after the train, airport shuttle, food, and accommodation, just my trip to the airport ended being over 1000 SEK! What's the deal?

-Penny Saver

A: Dear Penny,

Well, maybe there is no real deal! This is after all, Ryanair. The crazy thing is that up until 2007, Ryanair used to fly from Malmö airport! -Luke

Q: Dear Luke,

What are those strange bins in some university buildings that look like garbage bins – there's one space shaped like a triangle, the other's rectangular and the other one is round.

-G.O. Green

A: Dear G.O.,

They're supposed to be for recycling – but no one knows what goes into what!

-Luke

Unsolved Swedish Mysteries

I'm not a groupie

When you arrive in Lund to study, you notice many differences between your classes here and at home: teachers are too nice, you have less hours in class and first and foremost, get ready for some group work!

I had done group work back home a few times, but without much to report – except for the inevitable one person in the group who is never doing anything.

My first group work experiences in Sweden left me pondering. I thought, “What a waste of time. We've just spent 2 hours doing practically nothing – we could have accomplished the same amount of work in 15 minutes. No one is leading the discussion and this is pretty boring. Why couldn't we do this by email or

something?”

I then talked to a few fellow North Americans. They all shared the same feelings. I even remember one joking: will we need a meeting to determine when the next group meeting will be?

After a few frustrating group get-togethers, we did all we could to avoid meetings, or even to cancel them! Not really nice I have to say, but we got to fear them.

But in Sweden, life is centered around group work. This is not unique to here, I hear it's similar in Japan, for example.

It seems group work is a good way to make friends, to live experiences together and to accomplish tasks. Work in groups can often take long but the job gets done, and every-

one participates.

That last point is essential: the notion of equality is important in Sweden. No one is better than anyone, everyone is welcome to participate, there's no clear leader, every intervention is just as valid as the next...

Back home, as soon as we heard the word ‘group work’, the politics of group formation kicked in: some tried to form groups quickly, being really afraid of being stuck with people they didn't like.

With time you learn there is a certain ethic to groups in Sweden: do not talk too much, do not try to control the discussion and be patient. Three characteristics that some foreigners (like me!) do not always have!

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