



## **10 Minutes For The Planet**

### **Stockholm - A city as hip as it is green©**

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Hi there and welcome back to our weekly environmental series here on EnglishWaves, Ten Minutes for the Planet. Our current theme has us taking a look at the greenest cities on the planet by looking at the world's top 5 list as reported by the *Economist* Intelligence Unit's Green Cities Index. Just to jog your memory, we started off with number one on the list, Copenhagen, and last time we saw why Amsterdam takes spot number two. Today we move on to number three on the list, none other than the Swedish capital of cool, Stockholm.

There are few cities in the world that match Stockholm's wealth of green areas. It is surrounded by more than 200 nature reserves across the region, the nearest one just a 10-minute metro ride from the city center. The many parks are part of the high quality of life that defines the Stockholm brand, and every resident has a favorite spot to get away from it all – whether for a picnic, sporting activity or simply to relax.

In total, Stockholm offers its residents access to roughly 1000 parks, which make up an incredible 30% of the city's area. On top of that, when the city's nature reserves are taken into account, the proportion rises to 40%. Ask any local and they will also proudly tell you that the harbour's water is so clean that you can eat the fish caught in the city center. There are extensive plans to bolster the city's image as a beach destination by adding to the current 24 official beaches for swimming.

Apart from its leafy visage and despite its northern, cold location together with an increasing population, Stockholm has very low greenhouse gas emissions compared to its peers. Between 1990 and 2009 the city cut its emissions by 3.4 tonnes per person. This was made possible by reducing traffic congestion and adding more clean vehicles. Most trips in the city are made by public transport during morning peak hours, and a staggering 68% of all trips within the city center are made on foot or by bicycle. Like Copenhagen and Amsterdam, Stockholm too has a vision to be fossil fuel free in the near future, with the Swedish capital aiming for 2050.

More significantly however, the city managed to achieve a high proportion of renewable energy for heating houses by turning waste into a valuable resource. Stockholm has a rich tradition of waste incineration in order to convert household waste to energy. In

1909, the city's first incinerator plant started operating with the aim of reducing the household rubbish that ended up in landfills. This idea of using household waste for producing heat and electricity, whilst reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills has continued to develop since. The result? Almost zero household municipal waste ends up in the city's landfill. This has made it possible for more than 70% of Stockholm's households to have access to district heating.

Stockholm is consistently regarded as a Scandinavian center of excellence, reflected no less in its commitment to sustainability and its green economy. Join us again next time when we continue our look at the world's greenest cities. Stay tuned to Ten Minutes for the Planet on EnglishWaves.