



A woman cooling down after a sauna. Photo by Harri Tarvainen.
Source: Sauna from Finland. Suomi Finland.

Sauna: A Cornerstone of Finnish Culture

In Finnish culture, the sauna is not just a place for relaxation, but a space of shared heritage, community, and health. Sauna is woven into the very fabric of daily life, serving as a sanctum for social functions, bathing rituals, personal reflection, and self-care, and even as a place of politics and business.

Coming in a variety of shapes and sizes, a sauna is, at its most basic, a heated space designed to facilitate dry or wet heat sessions. Private and home saunas are constructed with natural wood or log exteriors and have a rustic look. They are commonly situated in peaceful, natural settings like a backyard, dock, or garden, but are also found in urban homes and apartment buildings—several apartments may share a sauna or an apartment may even have its own sauna. The interior of a typical sauna is simple and designed for maximum comfort and relaxation. The interior features wood-paneled walls, tiered benches, ambient lighting, and a central heat source.

A sauna's type is dependent on its central heat source. Most Finnish saunas use a traditional wood-burning stove (though electric heaters with stones are rapidly gaining in popularity). In this "traditional" sauna model, the smoke from the fire is vented out of the sauna, and steam, or *löyly*, is generated by pouring water over the heated rocks. Meanwhile, the aptly named smoke sauna, or *savusauna*, is so named because it lacks ventilation, allowing smoke to fill the space as wood is burned in the stove.

While all types of saunas can be found in houses, apartments, backyards, and gardens around Finland, urban and public saunas allow individuals without access to a private or home sauna to experience this very significant part of Finnish tradition and lifestyle. Featuring similar construction to private and home saunas, there are many public saunas in Finland of the traditional



Lakeside sauna in the autumn in Finland on 2nd October 1956.
Image from the Finnish Heritage Agency.



Modern style sauna. Baltic Leisure, Oxford, PA.

Note from the Director

Good things are often found in different forms across cultures. This was brought home to me when I realized how much quesadillas have in common with pizza. Once this lightbulb went off for me, I started to notice other cultures have their own version of bread combined with cheese and other toppings. Polish *bialys* and Turkish *pide* are dishes from other cultures I have tried recently. They are all similar, but have unique combinations of ingredients, spices, and textures, and so they are also quite different. Would I call them all pizza? No, but I enjoy the experience of comparing and contrasting them to a food so ubiquitous to me.

Similarly, many cultures have sweat bathing traditions. Sauna might be the first to come to mind here in America. The word sauna is from Finland; however, Finns would argue that the way most Americans take a sauna (with clothes on in dry heat) is not at all the correct way. Learning about other related cultural traditions in Asia, Europe, and amongst Native Americans has been one of the most interesting parts of the museum's sauna project for me. Our exhibition may not change anyone's preferred way to enjoy sweating, but I hope it opens people up to try other possibilities.

I never enter into arguments about which is better—Chicago style or New York style pizza. I like them both for different reasons. I think the same can be said for sauna Finnish-style sauna vs other cultural bathing traditions. They all are worth trying and have different things to offer.



Tracey Beck

Sauna continued from front cover



Travel Finland. Image by Elina Brotherus.

and smoke varieties. Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is home to many, including local favorites Löyly and Kumpula Sauna.

When visiting a public sauna, it is important to keep in mind some tried-and-true rules. One should always shower or wash before entering a sauna (this cardinal rule should also be observed when taking sauna in a private setting). One should bring a towel to sit on for hygienic purposes if going nude, and one must leave water in the bucket for the *Saunatonnttu*, the sauna elf who watches over the sauna. Finally, after a sauna session, one should cool off by taking a cold shower or jumping into a natural body of water. The last rule is viewed as an essential aspect of the sauna experience.

There are also some highly discouraged sauna practices. When at a public sauna, one should avoid conversing loudly out of respect for other sauna goers and should not stretch out on the benches to leave space for others. Most importantly, when adding water to the stones on the central

heat source to create steam, one should not add too much water at once. Doing so will create a sudden rise in heat and steam which can be jarring, and downright unpleasant, for other sauna goers. These rules form the very essence of sauna etiquette in Finland, which is largely rooted in tenets of cleanliness, tradition, togetherness, and respect.

The significance of sauna to Finland cannot be understated—it is deeply woven into the fabric of daily life. Finland, which boasts a population of 5.5 million inhabitants, is home to an estimated 3.3 million saunas, an almost 2-1 ratio of people to saunas!

To learn more about sauna in daily life and social practices in Finland, we invite you to enjoy the exhibition, *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland*, on view until March 9, 2025 and create or share your own memories and connections with sauna.



In Finnish folklore, the sauna is the home of a mystical creature known as the Saunatonnttu, or sauna elf. In many folk tales, the Saunatonnttu watches over the sauna and punishes sauna goers for bad behavior and misuse of the sauna. It is considered polite to leave water in the bucket for the Saunatonnttu before exiting the sauna. Image from Aarikka.

Do You Have a Christmas Goat?



One of the most iconic (and slightly confusing) Swedish Christmas decorations to foreigners is the classic straw *Julbock* or Christmas goat. Many people wonder what a goat has to do with the spirit of Christmas. As with many historic Swedish traditions, the fog of time has obscured the exact origin story of the decorative straw barnyard creature, but legend offers multiple explanations mainly drawn from Norse mythology and agricultural farming traditions.

While scholars cannot trace the exact era when the *Julbock* originated, one legend harkens back to the Viking god Thor, who was thought of as a powerful protector and felt compassion for humanity. Stories

recount Thor riding a chariot pulled by two strong goats named *Tanngrisnir* and *Tanngnjóstr*, which led to the iconography of a goat becoming connected to Thor's protection. History also recounts a midwinter Norse tradition when they sacrifice an effigy of Thor's goat, which would then come back to life like the sun does as it gets brighter each day as spring approaches. Later, Christian missionaries did not approve of this connotation and proclaimed the *Julbock* to be evil.

There are yet more stories about the *Julbock's* existence, including malevolent versions in which it was a trickster playing pranks on farms. The straw used for its construction usually came from the last patch of a wheat harvest, which was believed to be imbued with magical spirits. People would weave straw goats and sneak them into each other's houses. Eventually, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the role of the *Julbock* changed again, with depictions of people dressing up as goats to give out presents during the holiday. Finally, it evolved to the role we are most familiar with today, which is a friendly creature pulling a sleigh as the *Jultomten* distributes gifts.

No matter the origin of this unique creature, it can be found all over Sweden in various sizes, from tiny ornaments to a 40-foot-tall figure in the town square of Gävle (which usually gets burned down by vandals each year). *Julbockar* are typically placed on or near the Christmas tree as decorations in the home. To learn more about Swedish holiday traditions and to make your own *Julbock* ornament, register for the ASHM Craft Night Out on Friday, December 13th — St. Lucia Day in Sweden. Kirsten Hansen Gyllenhaal will lead participants through each step of the weaving process. The evening includes a holiday-themed tour, craft workshop, traditional *glögg*, and *lussekatter* (St. Lucia saffron buns)!



Take a Sauna at ASHM

In conjunction with *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland*, urban design and development collective Scout will be launching a pop-up outdoor sauna experience at ASHM starting in mid-December and running through March. The outdoor experience will be set up on the Museum's terrace and will feature barrel saunas for groups of sauna-goers.

Stay tuned for more information about how to book your sweat session and experience the wonders of sauna culture firsthand.

scout



Upcoming Events and Registration Info

There is always something going on at the American Swedish Historical Museum. See below for scheduled events. Please check with the Museum to confirm dates and other details. Refunds will not be granted for cancellations less than 10 days prior to the program date. Online registration is available through the event listing at www.americanswedish.org



Toddler Time 10:30 – 11:30 am

The third Tuesday of each month ASHM offers specially designed programs to introduce Swedish culture through art, science, and literature in

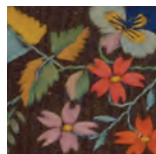
uniquely fun and creative ways to children ages 2 to 5 years old.

Tuesday, November 19th – What's Cooking?
Tuesday, December 17th – December in Sweden
Tuesday, January 21st – Keeping Warm in Winter
Tuesday, February 18th – Five Senses



Stories and Crafts – Free Family Day! Sunday, November 10th 12:00-4:00 pm

Join us for a Free Family Day at the Museum! Try out kids crafts and activities all about Swedish and Scandinavian books and stories! Play with Pippi Longstocking, explore with the Moomins, or get ready for winter with the Tomten. Learn about Swedish culture and create a tomte and other Scandinavian characters to take home! Walk-ins welcome, but help us plan with your RSVP.



Embroidery for Beginners Sunday, November 17th 12:00-4:00 pm

During this workshop, participants will learn about embroidery tools, such as different types of needles,

laying tools, hoops, and frames. After practicing a variety of stitches, participants will use an embroidery pattern taken from a piece in the Museum's collection to start embroidering a cloth napkin to take home to finish. \$75 for ASHM members and \$85 for nonmembers. Space is limited so register early to get your spot.



Members Shopping Week! Tuesday, November 19th-Sunday, November 24th

Join us for our first annual Member Shopping Week! To show our appreciation for all your support throughout the

year, members can enjoy 20% savings in-store and online from Tuesday, November 19, through Sunday, November 24. Visit shop.americanswedish.org to check out a wide variety of Scandinavian merchandise!



Julbord Friday, December 6th 5:00-9:00 pm

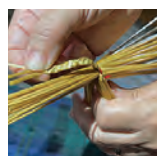
Start your Christmas celebrations by indulging in a Swedish holiday smörgåsbord prepared by Jeffrey A. Miller

Catering. Join us for a delicious spread of all your favorites including Christmas ham, herrings, meatballs, salads, and bread. A selection of ASHM Christmas Market vendors will be open from 5-7 pm, so you can shop while you enjoy a drink and some hors d'oeuvres before dinner. Book a table and invite family and friends to join you! Doors open at 5 pm for shopping. Dinner will be served at 7 pm. \$90 members, \$100 non-members, \$45 children ages 4-12, or book a table for eight for \$700. The deadline to register is December 2nd.



Lucia & Christmas Market Saturday, Dec. 7th 10:00 am-4:00 pm and Sunday, Dec. 8th 10:00 am-2:30 pm

Don't miss this unique magical holiday experience! The outdoor Christmas Market includes your favorite holiday deli items, Christmas decorations and gifts, and SWEA bakery treats. The Auxiliary Swedish Christmas Café will be selling holiday foods and sweets for your refreshment. Lucia processions will be held twice daily, and live holiday music will play throughout the day by folk duo Last Chance. Check the events page for details and pre-purchase tickets.



Craft Night Out: Straw Julbock Ornament Friday, December 13th 6:00-9:00 pm

What better place to celebrate St. Lucia Day than the American Swedish Historical Museum! Try

your hand at making a traditional straw Julbock ornament and learn about Swedish holiday traditions. Kirsten Hansen Gyllenhaal will lead you through each step of the process. No previous experience is necessary, but the project involves a moderate level of difficulty. Consider inviting a friend to join in the fun and provide an extra set of hands if needed. The evening includes a holiday-themed tour, craft workshop, traditional *glögg*, *lussekatter* (St. Lucia saffron buns) and other treats! \$40 for members, \$50 for nonmembers. Space is limited, so book your spot today



New Sweden Legacy Lecture Series

In this lecture series, explore the fascinating history of the New Sweden Colony and the legacy the settlement and its people had on Philadelphia and

beyond. The first three lectures will be held via Zoom, and the last lecture will be at the Museum, followed by a brunch reception. Visit the ASHM events page for more information and to register for the free virtual lectures. More dates to come.

Virtual Lectures: 12:00-1:00 pm (EST)

Wednesday, January 15th:
Paul Kahan – "Diversity, Conflict, and the 'Memory Hole:' Investigating Philadelphia's History"

Wednesday, February 19th:
Jay Smith – "An Introduction to John Morton: America's Finnish Founding Father"

To Register For Events

call 215-389-1776, or visit online at www.americanswedish.org/events



Genealogy Meeting Saturday, January 25th 1:30 pm

Gather with fellow ASHM members and explore the branches of your Swedish ancestry. Genealogy Club is a

benefit of ASHM membership. Not a member, no problem! Just add a membership on the event registration.



Pea Soup Supper Saturday, January 25th 6:00 pm

Warm up on a chilly winter's night with a bowl of Swedish yellow pea soup. Dinner is served with sharp cheese, crisp

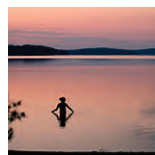
bread, and dessert. Tickets are \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. Pre-registration is required by January 24th.



Semlor and a Movie Saturday, February 8th 11:00 am

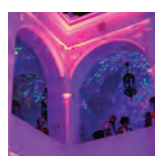
Treat yourself to a rich *semla*, a cream and almond paste-filled Swedish pastry, along with a cup of hot coffee and

a Swedish film. *Semlor* is often eaten before the start of Lent, the Swedish version of "Fat Tuesday." Event tickets are \$16 in advance and \$20 at the door. Ticket price includes one *semla*, additional *semlor* are \$6 each. Walk-in welcome or pre-register by phone or online by February 3rd.



Virtual Member Chat: Sauna is Life Exhibition Tour Wednesday, February 12th 12:00-1:00 pm

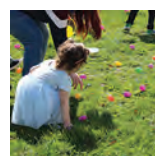
Join curator Brett Peters for a behind-the-scenes tour of *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland*.



extrABBAganza! ABBA Dance Party Saturday, March 8th 7:00-10:00 pm

Break out bell bottoms and platform shoes! What better place to celebrate the iconic

music of ABBA than the American Swedish Historical Museum. DJ Robert Drake will spin the throwbacks as everyone lets out their inner Dancing Queen. Tickets include Swedish-inspired bites, cash bar. \$35 members, \$40 non-members. 70's attire is encouraged but not necessary.



Easter Family Day Sunday, April 6th 2:00-4:00 pm

Introduce your little ones to Swedish Easter traditions. Children can make Swedish Easter crafts, dress up as

Swedish Easter witches, enjoy face painting, and take part in an egg hunt. Free activities are included with regular admission. Pay at the door.

Images from Recent Events

Photographs by ASHM Staff



▲ Attendees at Smörgåsbeer trying some Swedish drinks in our limited edition Smörgåsbeer 2024 glasses.



▲ An attendee at August's Toddler Time: All About Shapes.



▲ Smörgåsbeer 2024 in the sunset.



▲ Tyler Graybeal, owner of Sweetish Candy in Lancaster, PA, speaks about his collection featured in the Sweetest Side of Life balcony exhibit at the ASHM Annual Meeting.



▲ ASHM's Facility and Rental Manager Frank Sanders and Assistant Director Lauren Burnham pick apples for Rambo's Revival – New Sweden Apple & Lingonberry Hard Cider.



▲ Attendees at the ASHM Annual Meeting enjoying the mobile Swedish candy Pick-and-Mix wall from Sweetish Candy.



▲ Crayfish 2024 in our beautifully decorated tent.



◀ Attendees enjoying crayfish dinner with some Swedish snaps.



◀ Executive Director Tracey Beck presenting the Amandus Johnson Volunteer Service Award to winner Leonard Busby.

Contributions

Do you want to make a contribution?

There are several easy ways to support us. Visit our web page <http://www.americanswedish.org/support/donate> or call **215-389-1776** for more information.

New Members

July 1 – September 30, 2024

Sustaining

Rob Erickson

Friend

Nathalie Verma

Household

Shay Andersen
Jeff Cantwell
Niklas Jensen
Julie Shriver
Jenny Staahlberg
Doreen Sundelin
Paul Wagner

Individual

Sean Coffey
Koffe Ehnström
Mel Ferrara
Gloria Hasel
Drew Kreidler
Anna Maripuu
Allison Matia
Echo Reid
Sarah Stern

Senior/Student

Maria Angelastro
Pamela Blakely
Jerome Cloud
Sarah Darrow
Barbara Johnson
Sharin Lefevre
David Lehner
Rich Magnuson
Hydie Miller
Karen Reeds
Jennielynn Streed

In Memoriam

The ASHM community lost a very special member in the last few months. We send our condolences to her friends and family.

Donna Johnson

Contributions

July 1 – September 30, 2024

Serafimer

Anonymous
ASHM Auxiliary

Vasa

Margaret Copeland

Gold

Jane & Gordon Downing

Silver

Per Blomquist
Herbert & Zofia Rambo

Bronze

Jorgen Flood
Julie Jensen Byan
Fanny Warren,
in memory of Jackie Axilbund & Donna Johnson
Margaret Churchville
Chris Erikson
Patricia Hall,
in memory of Donna Johnson
Mark & Anyce Miles,
in memory of Christina Holm
Swedish Cultural Society of Cleveland

Friend

Jeanette Turnbull
Ralph Holmberg
Kristina & Charles Kalb,
in memory of Donna Johnson
Donna O'Connell
Diane Schueler,
in memory of Donna Johnson

Exploring the Legacy of the New Sweden Colony

For over twenty years, the New Sweden History Conference has been dedicated to assembling and expanding academic research on the 17th-century colony.

Although a niche topic, this conference has been a vital means of learning for both avocational historians and current scholars precisely because not many organizations or universities focus on it as a field of study. It is for this reason the New Sweden History Conference Committee seeks to make the

content and engagement around this topic as widely available to people across the country and around the world as possible.

We are excited to announce that the former one-day in-person conference will be transitioning to a new format! Starting in January 2025, the Committee will host a three-month virtual lecture series via Zoom, concluded by a final in-person lecture and gathering at ASHM in April. Each month will feature a virtual talk exploring the New Sweden Colony and its legacy through the fields of archaeology, art history, economics, history, politics, linguistics, material culture, musicology, religious history, or other related disciplines. The Delaware Valley and Mid-Atlantic region in the 17th century was a combination of many cultures, including the Lenape, Susquehannock, Swedish, Finnish, English, and Dutch peoples, and the lecture series encourages exploration of the interactions and legacy of each of the many groups. The virtual nature of the lectures invites participation from people around

the world, and the final in-person gathering allows for important networking to foster further scholarship.

All of this year's virtual lectures will be free thanks to our generous lecture series sponsors. A small registration fee will apply to the in-person lecture to cover the cost of brunch.

On behalf of the many organizations that make up the New Sweden History Conference Committee, we welcome you to join us to explore more about this fascinating history. Please visit americanswedish.org to see lecture dates and to register.





Gift Membership Form

Gift Recipient

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

- \$45: Senior/Student
- \$55: Individual
- \$75: Household
- \$100: Organizational
- \$125: Friend
- \$250: Sustaining
- \$500: Patron
- \$1,000: Key Contributor
- \$2,500: Life

Make check payable to ASHM or Charge my: VISA | MasterCard | Discover

Account # _____

Exp Date _____ Sec. Code _____ Zip _____

From: _____

Message: _____

The official registration and financial information of ASHM may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Your membership contribution to the American Swedish Historical Museum is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Among the benefits of membership are:

- free admission to the Museum and library
- use of the ASHM Swedish Film Library borrowing system
- guest passes
- subscription to the newsletter
- 10% discount in the Museum Store
- discounts on admission to most events, workshops and Swedish language classes

For more information, please call **215-389-1776**.

Please print all information as you wish it to appear on the membership mailings.

Return this form to:
 American Swedish Historical Museum
 Attn: Membership
 1900 Pattison Avenue
 Philadelphia, PA 19145-5901

Please detach here and return.

Meet Our New Curator: Brett Peters

We are very excited to introduce our new Curator at ASHM, Brett Peters!

Brett was born and raised in South Brunswick, New Jersey. He grew up ten minutes from Princeton Battlefield and became fascinated with history at a young age. Brett has a Bachelor of Arts in History from the College of New Jersey and a Master of Science in Museum Leadership from Drexel University. Brett previously curated exhibitions at Washington County Historical Society in Hagerstown, Maryland and Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites on topics ranging from the feudal history of Japan to uranium glass. In his free time, Brett enjoys biking, running, and cooking.

Make sure to say hello to Brett the next time you visit the Museum!



Christmas Market 2024

We're excited to announce that this year's Christmas Market features some new vendors in addition to the Market's traditional offerings.

- Crochet by Abbie – *Crochet items*
- Crooked Branch Arts – *Handmade wood products*
- Diane's Gems and Fibers – *Assorted crafts*
- Elizabeth Brown – *Handmade clothing and accessories*
- Jorgen Flood – *Books*
- Katie Rowe Creations – *Handmade ceramics*
- Revival Thrift and Vintage – *Jewelry*
- SWEA Philadelphia - *Baked Goods*
- ASHM Shop

Offerings from the ASHM Auxiliary and Midsommarklubben:

- Swedish Café
- Homemade Glögg from Midsommarklubben
- Mormor's Attic
- Swedish Deli Items
- Kids Tombola

Connecting
Cultures and
Community

From the ASHM Shop



We're excited to announce our first annual Member Shopping Week! To show our appreciation for all your support throughout the year, members can enjoy 20% savings in-store and online from Tuesday, November 19 through Sunday, November 24. Want to order online then pick up in person? Simply enter promotional code PICKUP upon checkout and you will be notified when your order is ready!

Coinciding with *Sauna is Life*, the Museum Shop is now offering Rento's luxury sauna products for the first time. These premium items imported from Finland include brushes, body washes, bath robes, sauna buckets and ladles. Great for gifting!

For foodies, bring these new items from Klädesholmen to holiday parties. Branteviks Herring, originating from the fishing village of Brantevik in Skåne, is among the most popular pickled herrings in Sweden today. O.P. Andersson Herring was launched as a limited edition for one year but was so popular that Klädesholmen brought it back. O.P. Anderson, "The Original Swedish Aquavit", was created by Carl August Anderson as a tribute to his father, Olof Peter Anderson in 1891.

Need fun and delicious stocking stuffers for everyone you know? Or maybe you've developed your own sweet tooth from the recent Swedish candy craze? You're in luck! We will have holiday-themed candy from trending brands like Bubs, Malaco, and Cloetta along with newly arrived chocolates from Fazer and Marabou.

Join us at the Lucia and Christmas Market and shop with us for unique gifts you will only find in person!

