

Fika: A Pause with Purpose in Swedish Life

Introduction

- What do you do when you feel tired and you need a break?
- Do you know the word “Fika”?

Vocabulary Exercises

Exercise 1: Match the words to their meanings

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Ritual | a) The state of being healthy, happy, and comfortable |
| 2. Productivity | b) A shared connection between people |
| 3. Well-being | c) A repeated action, often with symbolic meaning |
| 4. Embrace | d) A traditional practice of a particular society |
| 5. Intention | e) The purpose or aim behind an action |
| 6. Bond | f) The act of accepting something willingly |
| 7. Custom | g) The rate at which work is completed efficiently |

Exercise 2: Fill in the blanks with the words from exercise 1.

1. The team's daily coffee break became a relaxing ____.
2. Swedish workplaces believe fika supports employees' ____.
3. Fika is a cultural ____ that has existed for generations.
4. The manager's ____ was to improve teamwork through regular breaks.
5. Taking time to relax can actually boost ____.
6. Sharing fika helped the new colleagues form a strong ____.
7. Many foreigners ____ the fika lifestyle after moving to Sweden.

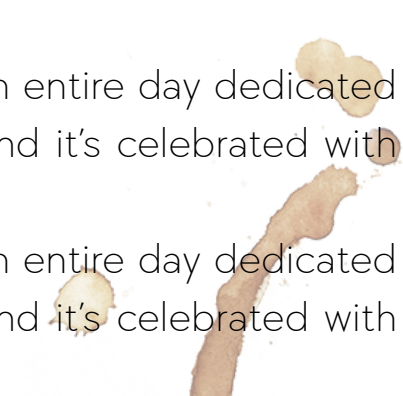


Exercise 3: Choose the correct word

1. Fika is a (mandatory / cherished / unimportant) tradition in Sweden.
2. The (intention / mistake / regret) behind fika is to encourage connection.
3. Many Swedes believe taking breaks improves their (productivity / laziness / workload).
4. Fika often leads to stronger (emails / bonds / distances) between coworkers.
5. A (ritual / deadline / summary) like fika can become part of your routine.
6. Sharing a coffee break helps support mental (exhaustion / overload / well-being).
7. New employees often (ignore / embrace / avoid) the idea of fika quickly.

Reading

Put the statements in the right places in the text. There is one that you do not need.

- But its purpose is deeper.
 - It's a chance for colleagues to step away from their tasks, reset their minds, and engage with each other as individuals.
 - Phones are prohibited during fika.
 - Fika is a ritual, a cultural cornerstone that encourages people to slow down, share a sweet treat, and connect—intentionally and meaningfully—with others.
 - Its popularity is so great that Sweden has an entire day dedicated to it—October 4th is Cinnamon Bun Day, and it's celebrated with joy nationwide.
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- Children grow up with fika as a natural part of their day, often associating it with warmth, comfort, and connection.

Fika: A Pause with Purpose in Swedish Life

In a world driven by deadlines and efficiency, Sweden offers a refreshing perspective: fika. This beloved tradition is far more than just a coffee break. (1).....

At first glance, fika might look like any other break involving coffee or tea and a pastry. (2) It creates a space for conversation, reflection, and bonding. It invites people to pause their busy lives and focus on being present—whether at work, home, or a local café.

Swedish workplaces often schedule fika twice a day, not only as a moment to relax but as a strategy to strengthen social ties and boost morale. (3)..... In fact, many Swedish companies believe that fika actually increases productivity by fostering better communication and a stronger sense of community.

The benefits of fika extend beyond the office. Friends meet up for weekend fika dates, families enjoy it at home, and students use it to unwind between classes. (4)

One of the most iconic fika snacks is the cinnamon bun, or *kanelbulle*. (5).....



One of the most iconic fika snacks is the cinnamon bun, or kanelbulle.
(5).....

But perhaps what makes fika so powerful is its simplicity. In a world where people are constantly “on,” fika offers an intentional pause—a reminder that well-being, conversation, and human connection are not luxuries, but necessities.

Whether it’s five minutes or thirty, alone or with others, fika is a practice that continues to shape Swedish identity. (6)

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Comprehension Questions

1. What deeper purpose does fika serve beyond just drinking coffee?
2. Why do some Swedish companies encourage fika twice a day?
3. How does fika impact workplace relationships?
4. In what other settings is fika enjoyed outside of work?
5. What do children learn through the tradition of fika?
6. What is the significance of October 4th in Sweden?
7. According to the text, why is fika relevant in today’s fast-paced world?



True or False

Decide if the statements below are true or false, correct the false statements.

1. Fika is only popular among older generations.
2. The main goal of fika is to relax and connect with others.
3. Swedish employers believe fika reduces productivity.
4. Fika is part of daily life for people of all ages in Sweden.
5. There is a national holiday in Sweden celebrating cinnamon buns.
6. Fika always lasts exactly 30 minutes.
7. The article suggests that fika reflects important cultural values in Sweden.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think regular social breaks like fika could work in your country or workplace?
2. How does your culture view the balance between work and rest?
3. Have you experienced a tradition similar to fika in your own life?
4. Why do you think simple daily rituals can have such a big impact on well-being?
5. How important is it to feel connected to colleagues or classmates during the day?
6. What challenges might arise when trying to introduce fika in a non-Swedish setting?
7. If you could create your own version of fika, what would it include?

Fika: A Pause with Purpose in Swedish Life – teacher's version

Introduction

- What do you do when you feel tired and you need a break?
- Do you know the word “Fika”?

If your students are not familiar with fika, add the following explanation - In a fast-paced world where productivity often takes priority, Sweden stands out with its deeply rooted tradition of fika—a daily pause to enjoy coffee, sweet treats, and meaningful conversation. But fika is more than a coffee break. It's a cultural habit that reflects Swedish values like balance, connection, and well-being. In this lesson, we'll dive into the history, meaning, and impact of this simple yet powerful ritual.

Vocabulary Exercises

Exercise 1: Match the words to their meanings


1. Ritual - c) A repeated action, often with symbolic meaning
2. Productivity - g) The rate at which work is completed efficiently
3. Well-being - a) The state of being healthy, happy, and comfortable
4. Embrace - f) The act of accepting something willingly
5. Intention - e) The purpose or aim behind an action
6. Bond - b) A shared connection between people
7. Custom - d) A traditional practice of a particular society



Exercise 2: Fill in the blanks with the words from exercise 1.

1. The team's daily coffee break became a relaxing RITUAL.
2. Swedish workplaces believe fika supports employees' WELL-BEING.
3. Fika is a cultural CUSTOM that has existed for generations.
4. The manager's INTENTION was to improve teamwork through regular breaks.
5. Taking time to relax can actually boost PRODUCTIVITY.
6. Sharing fika helped the new colleagues form a strong BOND.
7. Many foreigners EMBRACE the fika lifestyle after moving to Sweden.

Exercise 3: Choose the correct word

1. Fika is a (mandatory / **cherished** / unimportant) tradition in Sweden.
 2. The (**intention** / mistake / regret) behind fika is to encourage connection.
 3. Many Swedes believe taking breaks improves their (**productivity** / laziness / workload).
 4. Fika often leads to stronger (emails / **bonds** / distances) between coworkers.
 5. A (**ritual** / deadline / summary) like fika can become part of your routine.
 6. Sharing a coffee break helps support mental (exhaustion / overload / **well-being**).
 7. New employees often (ignore / **embrace** / avoid) the idea of fika quickly.
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Reading

Put the statements in the right places in the text. There is one that you do not need.

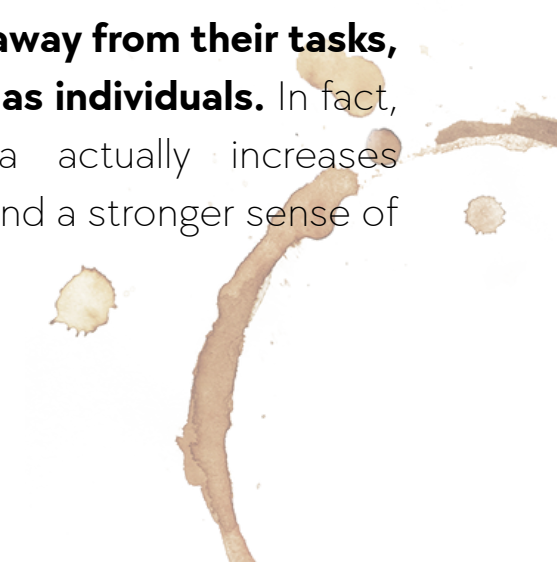
- *Phones are prohibited during fika. - the statement that is not needed.*

Fika: A Pause with Purpose in Swedish Life

In a world driven by deadlines and efficiency, Sweden offers a refreshing perspective: fika. This beloved tradition is far more than just a coffee break. **(1) Fika is a ritual, a cultural cornerstone that encourages people to slow down, share a sweet treat, and connect—intentionally and meaningfully—with others.**

At first glance, fika might look like any other break involving coffee or tea and a pastry. **(2) But its purpose is deeper.** It creates a space for conversation, reflection, and bonding. It invites people to pause their busy lives and focus on being present—whether at work, home, or a local café.

Swedish workplaces often schedule fika twice a day, not only as a moment to relax but as a strategy to strengthen social ties and boost morale. **(3) It's a chance for colleagues to step away from their tasks, reset their minds, and engage with each other as individuals.** In fact, many Swedish companies believe that fika actually increases productivity by fostering better communication and a stronger sense of community.





The benefits of fika extend beyond the office. Friends meet up for weekend fika dates, families enjoy it at home, and students use it to unwind between classes. **(4) Children grow up with fika as a natural part of their day, often associating it with warmth, comfort, and connection.**

One of the most iconic fika snacks is the cinnamon bun, or kanelbulle. **(5) Its popularity is so great that Sweden has an entire day dedicated to it—October 4th is Cinnamon Bun Day, and it's celebrated with joy nationwide.**

But perhaps what makes fika so powerful is its simplicity. In a world where people are constantly “on,” fika offers an intentional pause—a reminder that well-being, conversation, and human connection are not luxuries, but necessities.

Whether it's five minutes or thirty, alone or with others, fika is a practice that continues to shape Swedish identity. **(6) It asks us to reconsider our priorities, embrace balance, and find joy in the little moments.**

Comprehension Questions

1. What deeper purpose does fika serve beyond just drinking coffee? - IT'S A WAY OF SLOWING DOWN AND CONNECTING WITH OTHERS.
2. Why do some Swedish companies encourage fika twice a day? - IT'S A WAY TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL BONDS AND BOOST MORALE.
3. How does fika impact workplace relationships? - IT INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY.
4. In what other settings is fika enjoyed outside of work? - SCHOOL, HOME
5. What do children learn through the tradition of fika? - THEY ASSOCIATE IT WITH WARMTH, COMFORT AND CONNECTION
6. What is the significance of October 4th in Sweden? - IT'S A CINNAMON BUN DAY
7. According to the text, why is fika relevant in today's fast-paced world? - IN A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE ARE CONSTANTLY ON, IT'S OFFERS AN INTENTIONAL PAUSE TO SLOW DOWN, RELAX AND BUILD CONNECTIONS.

True or False

1. Fika is only popular among older generations. - FALSE
2. The main goal of fika is to relax and connect with others. - TRUE
3. Swedish employers believe fika reduces productivity. - FALSE
4. Fika is part of daily life for people of all ages in Sweden. - TRUE
5. There is a national holiday in Sweden celebrating cinnamon buns. - TRUE
6. Fika always lasts exactly 30 minutes. - FALSE
7. The article suggests that fika reflects important cultural values in Sweden. - TRUE

Discussion Questions

Discuss in pairs/groups.