

The coffee break in Sweden, called *fika*, is actually an opportunity to unwind, socialize and refresh.

The word “fika” (pronounced fee-ka) derives from the Swedish word *kaffe*, as a type of back slang originating in the 19th century where syllables of a word were reversed, (*fika* from *kaffi*).

Fika is both a noun and a verb. You can drink *fika* (coffee) or you can *fika* at work (coffee break).

While many other cultures have coffee breaks, the Swedes don't consider it a dash for caffeine. Instead it's considered a social institution. It's a chance to rejuvenate around a mug of the steaming beverage and *fikabröd* (fika bread), a sweet pastry like a cinnamon roll. It's not a time to check email, but to discuss personal interests.

The Tradition Of The Seven Cakes

When hosting a fika, Swedish etiquette dictates that seven types of *fikabröd* (cakes, cookies, or pastries) are served with the coffee. Why seven? Through the ages, the number seven has been associated with magic or good fortune, especially in the bible and in mythology.