

# Destination Denmark

The Danes are, overwhelmingly, a happy bunch. In fact, if you believe those contentment surveys that come out every couple of years, Denmark is one of the happiest nations on earth with some of the best quality of life.

It's not hard to see why. Denmark's hydrocarbon-rich economy is booming; it has the highest per capita GDP in the European Union (EU); literacy is 100%; unemployment is low; and its social-welfare programmes are the envy of continents. Education is free, and about half of all Danish students who graduate from secondary school continue on to higher education.

You don't need statistics to understand the Dane's happy lot, though. Stroll around Copenhagen or pretty much any Danish town and you'll experience some of the most harmonious civic spaces anywhere. The capital's intimate scale and faultless transport systems combine with the ornate history and bold modern lines of the built environment to delight the eye, while the locals' courtesy and sense of humour is refreshing.

Along winding cobbled streets Danes shop and dine at some of the most exciting places in Europe. Copenhagen's restaurants have more Michelin stars than any other Scandinavian city, and Denmark as a whole would doubtless have more still if the inspectors from Michelin ever troubled themselves to leave the capital. Even standards in a workaday Danish café are generally very high.

Denmark continues to stamp its effortlessly cool style on the world with its furniture, fashion, architecture and graphic design, as it has done for the last half-century or so. This obsession with good design, detail and fine craftsmanship is evident even in something as mundane as a Copenhagen metro or train ride.

Beyond the capital, Denmark offers a mix of lively cities, rural countryside, medieval churches, Renaissance castles and tidy 18th-century villages. Neolithic dolmen, preserved 2000-year-old 'bog people', and impressive Viking ruins are just some of the remnants of the nation's long and fascinating history.

Centuries on from the Viking era, Denmark remains very much a maritime nation, bordered by the Baltic and the North Sea. No place in the country is more than an hour's drive from its lovely seashore, much of which is lined with splendid white-sand beaches.

It's hard, in short, to find fault with the place. The visitor's most heartfelt grumble is usually the cost of visiting Denmark. True, it is not a cheap destination, but no more so than the UK, and which nation's public transport system would you rather use?

Cheer yourself up by thinking of the country's peerless organisation and clockwork railway timetable as being subsidised by the extremely high taxes paid by your hosts. When viewed in this way, this first-rate destination seems like good value, and you get the fairy tales thrown in for free: the Danish royal family is genuinely loved and respected by the vast majority of its citizens, not least handsome Prince Frederik, his beautiful Australian-born princess-bride, Mary, and their young family.

Look a bit closer, however, and as in a Hans Christian Andersen fable you'll find a darker side, too. Less-happy events have been intruding on the country's orderly perfection of late. The last few years have been turbulent ones – by Danish standards anyway – in the social and political

realms. Not unlike other European nations, there's been a gradual shift to the right in this famously liberal nation. Concern has grown over immigration – particularly immigration from Muslim countries – and an erosion of traditional values.

These issues were brought into sharp and tragic relief in 2006 when Denmark became the villain in the eyes of many Muslims around the world, when a local newspaper printed cartoons of the prophet Mohammed. Although the pictures were not intended to be insulting in their nature, the very act of depicting Mohammed broke a serious taboo. It sparked a firestorm of deadly rioting in which mobs trashed several Danish consulates around the world.

It was a reminder that, for all the talk of assimilation and the comprehensive state effort to achieve it, serious racial, cultural and religious fault lines and prejudices remain. This challenge to tolerance has un-nerved many Danes, who have had to confront an underlying resentment at non-European newcomers. Racism, half-hinted at by the phrase 'second generation Danes' (used to describe nonwhite, non-European citizens) is the elephant in Denmark's living room.

In 2007 three nights of rioting in Copenhagen, during which 600 people were arrested, made more 'man-bites-dog-style news' around the world. Although it wasn't quite the urban Armageddon that some US news channels suggested, the burning of a local youth centre that had been closed by the city government and the resulting demonstrations by youths and left-wingers was unprecedented, and a reminder that discontent and disaffection lurk just beneath the surface. Cosy consensus, it seems, is less of a sure bet these days.

Cynics will add that the reason the Danes are so content with their lot is because they have such low expectations of life, and that their supposedly equitable high-tax welfare state is grounded in a national psyche defined by resentment of anyone who is seen to get above another.

While there may be some truth in such observations, all in all this is rather exaggerated carping. The fact is that Denmark remains a remarkably blessed country.

## FAST FACTS

Unified as a state: 10th century AD  
 Population: 5.5 million (July 2007)  
 Type of government: constitutional monarchy  
 Parliament: Folketing (179 seats)  
 Coastline: 7314km  
 Unemployment: 3.8% (May 2006 versus 9% for Euro Zone)  
 Number of Michelin stars: 9  
 Tax rates: income tax 39% minimum; VAT 25%

# Getting Started

Denmark is an easy-going, easy to manage country with a wide range of activities and cultural interests serving most tastes. It is expensive compared with most other countries, although careful planning – especially of accommodation – can help keep costs down.

## WHEN TO GO

Late June, July and August are high season, with open-air concerts including the big ones such as Roskilde (see p22), street activity and basking on the beach. Other bonuses: longer hours at museums and other attractions, and potential savings on accommodation (some hotels drop their rates). Downsides: lots of other travellers celebrating midsummer with gusto. Mitigating factor: in late August, Danish kids are back in school – summer weather but fewer crowds.

May and early June can also be delightful for a visit. The land is a rich green, accented with fields of yellow rapeseed flowers; the weather is generally warm and comfortable; and you'll beat the rush of tourists. Although autumn can also be pleasant, it's not nearly as scenic, as the rural landscape has by then largely turned brown. Winter, with its cold weather and long nights, is pretty inhospitable to tourism. Many destinations close up in October and don't open again until late April.

## COSTS & MONEY

Unless you're Scandinavian, British or Japanese, you'll probably find Denmark an expensive country. Partly this is due to the 25% value-added tax (VAT), called *moms* in Danish, which is included in every price from hotel rooms and restaurant meals to car rentals and shop purchases.

Still, your actual costs will depend on how you travel and it is possible to see Denmark without spending a fortune. If staying in modest hotels and eating at inexpensive restaurants, you can expect to spend about 600kr per

### DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Bottle opener – there are no twist-top beers, so unless you are born Danish and can pop a bottle with a lighter...
- Bike lock – a small one can be useful when locking up hire bikes or stabilising your luggage.
- Eye mask – to help you sleep during the long days of summer.
- Mobile phone – sim-cards and sending international text messages are very cheap (see p322).
- Mosquito repellent – if you plan to spend a lot of time outdoors during the summer.
- Motion-sickness pills – if you're sensitive and plan to ride ferries.
- Prescriptions – for any medicine you bring in. Customs officials are very strict on prescription drugs.
- Warm sleeping clothes – it can get cold at night even on mild days, especially if you're camping.
- Umbrella – there's a fair chance it'll be a much-used companion.
- Water bottle – can save you a bundle on bottled drinks.
- A watch – trains run on time, and tours aren't a minute late. Danes operate similarly in social situations and don't wait for the disorganised.

See Climate Charts (p317) for more information.

day, assuming double occupancy, or 800kr if you're travelling alone (and less travelling in the countryside). Interestingly, top-end hotels, which commonly have keen weekend and holiday rates, often cost only 30% more than regular rates at budget hotels.

Some attractions and businesses, such as those in the accommodation and hospitality services, use the terms 'high season' and 'low season'. The usage depends on the type of business, but generally the high season (longer opening hours and higher prices) coincides with the school summer holiday, from about mid-June to mid-August. Low season generally means any time outside that period.

If you're on a budget, consider Denmark's extensive network of camping grounds and hostels. Hostels are widely used by all age groups and are usually set up more like small hotels than cavernous drop-in centres. By travelling this way and preparing your own meals, you might get by on 300kr per day.

Expect to pay 650kr per day to hire the cheapest economy car; the daily rate drops to around 500kr for longer rentals. One advantage of travelling by car is that you can often find economical accommodation options outside the city centre, so you may save a bit on hotel bills. Car ferries are reasonable, but the charges can add up.

Long-distance public transport is reasonably priced, and it helps that Denmark is small – the most expensive train ticket between two points in Denmark costs about 390kr.

You can save money by purchasing a municipal discount card such as the Copenhagen Card, which gives free or discounted admissions to sights and activities, plus use of public transport. See local listings for more information.

## LITERATURE

*Danmark* by John Roth Andersen is an attractive hardback coffee-table book. A multilingual commentary complements the colour photography.

*Discover Denmark – on Denmark and the Danes; Past, Present and Future* by the Danish Cultural Institute provides a comprehensive overview of Danish society, covering topics such as history, politics, arts, culture and social issues.

*A Kierkegaard Anthology* (1973) by Robert Bretall is considered the definitive work on Denmark's famed philosopher, comprising a broad cross section of Søren Kierkegaard's major works and somehow making it not too heavy. To read in more depth, look into Kierkegaard's *Sickness unto Death*, *Fear and Trembling* or *Either/Or*. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (1846), Kierkegaard passionately laid the groundwork for existentialism.

Children love *The Magic Hat and other Danish Fairy Tales* (edited by Clara Stroebe) and anything by Hans Christian Andersen. There's an avalanche of books by and about Andersen. The definitive biography is *Hans Christian Andersen* by Elias Bredsdorff. *Just as Well I'm Leaving – Around Europe with Hans Christian Andersen* by Michael Booth (one of the authors of this edition of *Denmark*) is a funny, entertaining travelogue following in the footsteps of the amazing, peculiar and troubled writer.

*The Golden Age of Danish Art* by Hans Edvard Norregard-Nielsen takes a look at the art of the early 19th century; it's full of colour illustrations.

Plenty has been written about Denmark's Viking era culture and history. *The Viking World* by James Graham-Campbell is a book with handsome photos that outlines the history of the Vikings by detailing excavated sites and artefacts. *The Viking* by Bertil Almgren is an authoritative book tracing Viking history in both the Old and New Worlds.

## HOW MUCH?

Row-your-own Viking ship in Roskilde: 50kr

Cycle hire: 65-90kr for 24hr (or free in Copenhagen, if you're lucky)

Locker in train station: 20kr for 24hr

Copenhagen Card: 199/429kr for 24/72hr

Windsurfing lesson: about 500kr for 3hr, incl equipment rental

## LONELY PLANET INDEX

Litre of gas/petrol: 10kr

Litre of bottled water: 12kr

Bottle of Carlsberg: 7-25kr

Souvenir T-shirt: 90kr

Hot sausage from a street vendor: 25kr

# TOP PICKS



## FILMS & PLAYS

The most significant cinematic movement to have come out of Denmark is the Dogma 95 movement (see p45), and its most celebrated and awarded co-founder is Lars von Trier. Some landmark Danish cinema including work from the Dogma 95 movement are:

- *Pelle the Conqueror* (1988) Director: Bille August
- *Babette's Feast* (1987) Director: Gabriel Axel
- *Italian for Beginners* (2000) Director: Lone Scherfig
- *The Idiots* (1998) Director: Lars von Trier
- *After the Wedding* (2006) Director: Susanne Bier
- *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* aka *Smilla's Sense of Snow* (1997) Director: Bille August
- *Breaking the Waves* (1996) Director: Lars von Trier
- *Copenhagen* (1998) Playwright: Michael Frayn
- *Festen* (the Celebration; 1998) Director: Thomas Vinterberg

## TOP RESTAURANTS

A new experimentation with techniques and technology, a move towards local and seasonal produce, as well as the rise of varied international cuisine, make Denmark easily the best Scandinavian destination for food. Some of the most exciting restaurants:

- Alberto K (p98)
- Geranium (p100)
- Noma (p102)
- The Paul (p98)
- Prémisse (p101)
- Umami (p101)

## FESTIVALS

The summer calendar is rammed with urban, cultural happenings as well as plenty of country high jinks. Music is a big feature (especially rock and jazz). For descriptions and full details, see the Events Calendar, p22.

- Roskilde Festival
- Århus Festival Week
- Riverboat Jazz Festival in Silkeborg
- Skagen Festival
- Copenhagen Jazz Festival

*In Denmark It Could Not Happen: The Flight of the Jews to Sweden in 1943* is a personal narrative of Jewish author Herbert Pundik's escape to Sweden during WWII and the assistance he received from fellow Danes.

The hardback *Denmark: A Modern History* by W Glyn Jones is one of the more comprehensive and insightful accounts of contemporary Danish society.

*Women in Denmark, Yesterday and Today* by Inga Dahlgård traces Danish history from a woman's perspective.

For novels about Denmark and by Danish authors, see p43.

## THE KEY TO TRAVELLING GREEN

If you want to travel sustainably, Denmark is the place to do it. Creating a modest carbon footprint and minimising your environmental impact have been made very easy indeed. For starters there's the excellent public transport network and the fact that it's easy to cycle almost everywhere. And let's not forget that a significant percentage of the power you use is generated by all those wind turbines. Denmark's hospitality industry is also trying to help you limit your impact on the environment. More than 80 properties have so far earned Green Key certification, ranging from larger hotels to summer cottages, camping sites and even the odd restaurant. There are 56 separate criteria for certification, including use of chemicals, water and energy consumption, waste recycling and food preparation (with points for local sources). The scheme specifies nonsmoking rooms and the provision for organic and low-fat food in the restaurants. Noncompulsory measures include the composting of green waste and restriction of pesticides. Just look for the sign of the green key on websites and marketing material.

A useful website for visitors interested in ecological farm stays, [www.ecoholiday.dk](http://www.ecoholiday.dk), lists 12 farms throughout Denmark that don't use pesticides or chemical fertilisers and which often allow guests to get involved in farm life, including feeding the animals. These places can make excellent family destinations.

An excellent resource for those wanting to avoid air travel is the website <http://seat61.com>, which offers extensive details on sea and rail travel options to and from Denmark (see also the Transport chapter on p325).

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Denmark's regional tourist websites offer comprehensive pretravel inspiration as well as detailed transport and logistical planning information. See the relevant regional chapter for details.

**Copenhagen This Week** ([www.ctw.dk](http://www.ctw.dk)) Weekly culture listings for the capital city.

**Danish Tourist Board** ([www.visitdenmark.com](http://www.visitdenmark.com)) Comprehensive site, with lots of handy preplanning tips and links to all the regional tourist offices.

**Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs** ([www.denmark.dk](http://www.denmark.dk)) Official site, with information about doing business, studying, living and playing in Denmark, and useful links all around.

**Legø** ([www.lego.com](http://www.lego.com)) All you ever wanted to know about the little plastic bricks – plus virtual games, online shopping, and up-to-date information on the Legoland parks including, of course, the one at Billund (p281).

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Succinct summaries on travel to Denmark and almost any place on earth. Don't forget to visit the Thorn Tree for updates from fellow Lonely Planet readers and fans.

**Wonderful Copenhagen** ([www.visitcopenhagen.com](http://www.visitcopenhagen.com)) The city tourist board's site is useful even if you're just transiting through the capital and surrounds.

# Events Calendar

Although the summer calendar is packed with a fantastic variety of events from music to food and beer festivals, there's plenty going on in the cooler months too. Enjoy atmospheric Christmas markets, hip film festivals and the kitsch winter wonderland that is Tivoli in December.

## JANUARY

**NEW YEAR CONCERTS** New Year  
Classical music is performed in major cities in early January by the Zealand, Århus, Odense, Aalborg and West Jutland symphony orchestras.

**WINTER JAZZ FESTIVAL** late January-early February  
From the end of January to early February those suffering from jazz withdrawal can get their fix from this smaller scale festival ([www.vinterjazz.dk](http://www.vinterjazz.dk)) held at various venues through the city.

## FEBRUARY & MARCH

**NIGHT FILM FESTIVAL** early March  
Held in Copenhagen ([www.natfilm.dk](http://www.natfilm.dk)) over 10 days shows more than 100 international films in their original languages.

**NATFILM FESTIVAL** 2nd half March  
This atmospheric 'night film' festival ([www.natfilm.dk](http://www.natfilm.dk)) is held throughout the city's cinemas. This is Denmark's largest film festival showcasing over 160 new movies from around the world.

## APRIL

**QUEEN MARGRETHE'S BIRTHDAY** 16 April  
Celebrated at Amalienborg Slot in Copenhagen, with the royal guards in full ceremonial dress and the queen waving from the balcony at noon.

## MAY

**CARNIVAL IN AALBORG** late May  
The 'Battle of Carnival Bands' and the parade are features of this four-day celebration ([www.karnevalaalborg.dk](http://www.karnevalaalborg.dk)) that ends with a grand fireworks display. Up to 100,000 visitors share in the excitement.

**ØLFESTIVAL** mid-May  
Specialist beer and micro-brewing are booming in Denmark right now. This is the country's largest beer festival drawing crowds of over 10,000 thirsty attendees.

**COPENHAGEN MARATHON** mid-May  
Scandinavia's largest marathon ([www.sparta.dk](http://www.sparta.dk)) is on a Sunday in mid-May and draws around 5000 participants and tens of thousands of spectators.

**COPENHAGEN CARNIVAL** Whitsun  
Held over three days at Whitsun (50 days after Easter) this is the Danes' take on a Brazilian-style shebang with floats, musicians and costumed dancers. Check out [www.karneval.dk](http://www.karneval.dk).

**SPOT FESTIVAL** late May-early June  
Showcasing up-and-coming Danish and Scandinavian talent, with most forms of popular music evident in and around Musikhuset. For details see [www.spotfestival.dk](http://www.spotfestival.dk).

## JUNE

**COPENHAGEN DISTORTION** early June  
A five-day celebration ([www.cphdistortion.dk](http://www.cphdistortion.dk)) of the city's nightlife with the emphasis on clubs and DJ bars.

**RIVERBOAT JAZZ FESTIVAL** mid-June  
Held in Silkeborg, some 50 bands enliven the city with numerous performances ([www.riverboat.dk](http://www.riverboat.dk)), some taking place on land, others on river boats.

**MIDSUMMER EVE** 23 June  
Known as Sankt Hans Aften, the night sky is alight with bonfires on beaches all around Denmark.

**SKAGEN FESTIVAL** late June  
Held over four days this festival ([www.skagenfestival.dk](http://www.skagenfestival.dk)) in Skagen features folk and world music performed by Danish and international artists.

**ROUND ZEALAND BOAT RACE** late June  
Held over three days this substantial yacht race circles the island of Zealand, starting and ending in Helsingør.

**ROSKILDE FESTIVAL** late June  
Northern Europe's largest music festival ([www.roskilde-festival.dk](http://www.roskilde-festival.dk)) rocks Roskilde for four consecutive days each summer. Advance sales start in December, and the festival usually sells out.

**FREDERIKSSUND VIKING FESTIVAL** late June/early July  
Held in Frederikssund over a two-week period. Costumed 'Vikings' present an open-air drama ([www.vikingspil.dk](http://www.vikingspil.dk)), followed by a banquet with Viking food and entertainment.

**SANKT HANS AFTEN (ST HANS EVENING)** Midsummer Eve  
The Danes let rip on the longest night of the year with bonfires in parks, gardens and, most popular of all, on the beaches. They burn an effigy of a witch on the pyre (she is said to fly off to the Hartz mountains in Germany), sing songs and get merry.

**DANISH DERBY** late June  
Denmark's most important horse race ([www.galopsport.dk](http://www.galopsport.dk)) is held at the Klampenborg race course to the north of the city.

## JULY

**COPENHAGEN JAZZ FESTIVAL** early July  
This is the biggest entertainment event of the year in the capital, with 10 days of music. The festival ([www.jazzfestival.dk](http://www.jazzfestival.dk)) features a range of Danish and international jazz, blues and fusion music, with 500 indoor and outdoor concerts.

**ÅRHUS JAZZ FESTIVAL** mid-July  
A week-long celebration ([www.jazzfest.dk](http://www.jazzfest.dk)), with big-name local and international acts doing their thing in various theatres, cafés and town squares.

**VIKING MOOT** late July  
Held for two days at the Moesgård Museum in Århus, it features a Viking-style market with crafts, food and equestrian events and Vikings of all nationalities competing to out-fight and out-roar each other.

## AUGUST

**KULTURHAVN** first week of August  
This unique event ([www.kulturhavn.dk](http://www.kulturhavn.dk)) focuses on the harbour and waterways of Copenhagen with a wide programme of cultural events, sports and parades, centred on the recently redeveloped 'beach' at Islands Brygge. Most events are free.

**HAMLET SUMMER PLAYS** first half August  
Theatre performances ([www.hamletsommer.dk](http://www.hamletsommer.dk)) of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* take place at Kronborg Slot in Helsingør.

**COPENHAGEN PRIDE PARADE** early August  
This festive gay pride parade ([www.copenhagenpride.dk](http://www.copenhagenpride.dk)) marches with Carnival-like extravagance through the centre of Copenhagen.

**TØNDER FESTIVAL** late August  
Held in Tønder for four days, this is one of northern Europe's largest folk festivals ([www.tf.dk](http://www.tf.dk)), featuring numerous indoor and outdoor performances and lots of hilarity.

**ÅRHUS FESTIVAL WEEK** last Friday in August  
The 10-day Århus Festuge bills itself as Denmark's largest annual multicultural festival and features scores of music performances, theatre, ballet, modern dance, opera, films and sports events at indoor and outdoor venues ([www.aarhusfestuge.dk](http://www.aarhusfestuge.dk)).

**GOLDEN DAYS IN COPENHAGEN** late August-early September  
Held over two weeks, the city celebrates with art exhibits, poetry readings, theatre, ballet and concerts that focus on Denmark's 'Golden Age' (1800–50). Check out [www.goldendays.dk](http://www.goldendays.dk) for details.

**INDEX** mid-August-late September  
As befitting one of the great Design capitals of the world, Copenhagen now has its own annual design event ([www.indexawards.dk](http://www.indexawards.dk)), Index, centred on a 100-entry strong annual design award. Entrants are usually exhibited in pavilions in the city's main squares.

**COPENHAGEN COOKING** end August-early September  
Scandinavia's largest food festival ([www.copenhagencooking.dk](http://www.copenhagencooking.dk)) mainly focuses on gourmet food and is held in venues and restaurants throughout the city – though centred on Øksnehallen.

## SEPTEMBER

**GOLDEN DAYS FESTIVAL** from early September  
This cultural-historic festival ([www.goldendays.dk](http://www.goldendays.dk)) takes place every two years (the next is in 2008) for three weeks and involves many museums and venues in the city. The theme is different each time – the last one held in 2006 focussed on King Christian IV and the Renaissance.

**BUSTER** mid-September  
This thriving children's film festival ([www.buster.dk](http://www.buster.dk)) runs for one week and features offerings from around the world, as well as workshops where children can make their own films.

**ART COPENHAGEN** September  
This major art fair ([www.artcph.com](http://www.artcph.com)) showcases the work of over 450 Nordic artists and attracts in excess of 10,000 visitors.

**COPENHAGEN BLUES FESTIVAL** late September  
This international event ([www.copenhagenblues-festival.dk](http://www.copenhagenblues-festival.dk)) is held over a week at various venues in the city.

**COPENHAGEN FILM FESTIVAL** late September  
Featuring 100% European and domestic films this relatively new festival ([www.copenhagenfilm-festival.dk](http://www.copenhagenfilm-festival.dk)) held over 10 days shows 145 films, often with director/actor Q&As.

## OCTOBER

**KULTURNATTEN** second Friday in October  
This wonderful, atmospheric event ([www.kulturnatten.dk](http://www.kulturnatten.dk)) sees the city's museums, theatres, galleries, libraries and even Rosenborg Slot throw open their doors through the night with a wide range of special events. Public transport is free this night.

## NOVEMBER

**CPH:DOX** early to mid-November  
This acclaimed international documentary film festival ([www.cphdox.dk](http://www.cphdox.dk)), now in its fifth year and the largest of its kind in Scandinavia, screens films in several cinemas throughout the city.

## DECEMBER

**CHRISTMAS FAIRS** early December  
Held all around Denmark throughout December, with food booths, arts and crafts stalls, and sometimes parades. Particularly atmospheric is the Christmas fair held for two days at Den Gamle By in Århus.

**GREAT CHRISTMAS PARADE** last Saturday in November  
Copenhagen kicks off one of its favourite times of the year with a parade that works its way through the city centre. Father Christmas and his *nisser* (elves) enter the city amid much ballyhoo, ending up in Rådhuspladsen for the lighting of the giant tree.

**TIVOLI** mid-November–December 23  
Tivoli reopens for Christmas with a large market and buckets of schmaltz. Attractions include special Christmas tableaux, costumed staff and theatre shows. Fewer rides are operational but the mulled wine and æbleskiver (small doughnuts) ought to be ample compensation.

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### THE BEST OF JUTLAND

Two Weeks

Experience medieval architecture and Viking life down south at **Ribe** (p230), Denmark's oldest town. You need at least two days to make the most of this well-preserved medieval town. Explore the narrow cobblestone alleys, enjoy Danish cuisine at the atmospheric town centre restaurants, and soak up the sense of history.

The arresting museums, galleries and well-restored castle of **Kolding** (p230) make it a worthwhile pit stop on the journey north. Next stop, the leafy **Lake District** (p274) for a couple of days of serious relaxation and mucking around on the water. Combine some fascinatingly vivid historical experiences with big nights out and cosmopolitan café culture at **Århus** (p255). Fine architecture, haunting Viking ruins, big nights out and surprisingly good food awaits at the re-invented industrial city of **Aalborg** (p294). Give yourself two days to unravel this city on the Limfjord. Best comes last at cinematic **Skagen** (p304) hugging Denmark's northernmost tip. Take at least two days to make time for the artwork and to indulge in fine seafood, soak in its incredible northern light, dip a toe in its angry seas and ride an Icelandic pony on the beach.



An ideal mix of historical town centres, culture, gently rolling wooded hills and wide open sea vistas.



## NORTHERN SMORGASBORD

10 Days

Deservedly popular, this compact loop from Copenhagen around North Zealand is best taken at a leisurely pace. Our trip starts west of the capital but it's just as easy to start the circle heading north.

After leaving fast-paced Copenhagen, you'll be in **Roskilde** (p130) at the edge of a fjord, where you can get up close to Viking ships at the hands-on museum dedicated to Viking ship building. The local church is also the last resting place of a millennia of Danish kings and queens.

North from here is magnificent **Frederiksborg Slot** (p122), dominating the unassuming town of Hillerød. It's hard to decide which is more impressive, the Baroque interiors or the regal grounds, perfect for a stroll.

To truly appreciate the northern lights and sunbathing Scandinavian-style, head to the northern beaches: **Tisvildeleje** (p129) is pristine; **Gilleleje** (p128), a modern harbour, has its fair share of sand and surf; and **Hornbæk** (p126) is the place where the young and good-looking go to appreciate the natural beauty and their own.

Further south along the coast stands historic **Kronborg Slot** (p117) in Helsingør, much more than simply being the home of the existential ditherer Hamlet.

Be sure to skip the highway and take the spectacular coastal road south to Humlebæk and the **Louisiana Museum** (p116), whose splendid architecture rivals its collection of contemporary art from around the world. It's a short but picturesque drive along the 'Danish Riviera' back to Copenhagen and big city life.

An easy and accessible circuit taking in glam little beaches, fairy-tale castles, Viking ships and almost every dead Danish Royal.



## ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

### SOUTHERN HIDEAWAYS

One Week

Most travellers head north or west from Copenhagen but this trip takes you to islands south of Zealand where it's possible to feel like you're far from civilisation, quite a feat in this otherwise densely developed part of the country.

On the E55 it's almost a straight shot south to Møn and the charming town of **Stege** (p166). There's a bird-watching tower on the untouched small island of **Nyord** (p169) only a few minutes away. Driving east from Stege you pass the **Keldby Kirke** (p170), worth a stop for its remarkable frescoes. It's best to base yourself here or further east to truly feel like you've left the rest of the world behind. The eastern side of the island is dominated by forests great for hiking and the white chalk Møns Klint. Climb down to the waters' edge to appreciate the striking view. A short drive north of here is peaceful **Liselund Park** (p172), which should spark reveries in even the most jaded. South of both is the town of **Klintholm Havn** (p172), where you'll find a narrow sandy beach and a welcoming vibe from the locals.

Rather than returning the same way, take the 287 west from Stege to the island of Bogø and cross over to the island of Falster from where it's only a short drive south to the beach resort of **Marielyst** (p175).



An itinerary for hermits, this will take you far from the crowds to Renaissance churches, white cliffs and peaceful beech woods.

## TAILORED TRIPS

### DENMARK ON A BUDGET

Six Days

Copenhagen need not cost the earth if you know where to stay and what to do. Get around on one of the free municipal bikes and take in the free museums including the **Statens Museum** and **Davids Samling** (p86), before cycling over to tour quirky Christiania for a tasty, cheap curry lunch. The city's carefully tended parks are ideal for a picnic and a spot of people-watching. If you dare, brave the water at one of the city's free saltwater swimming pools such as

**Copencabana** (p88) or along the long sandy lagoon beach of **Amager Strandparken** (p88).

The sleepy island of **Bornholm** (p181) is an ideal budget destination. The overnight ferry from Køge just south of Copenhagen, will save you a night's accommodation and is a great use of time since you travel while you sleep. On arrival hire a bike and make a leisurely four-day tour of the island camping at **Dueodde's** (p188) fine sand beaches and hostelling at the picturesque towns including **Gudjhem** (p192) and **Allinge** (p195) along its northern coast. Eat heartily for around 100kr at the island's many smokehouses and spend the money you save on the island's excellent micro-brewed beer.



### CHILD FRIENDLY, ADULT APPROVED

One Week

The obvious big ticket attractions are, of course, the excellent **Tivoli** (p75) in Copenhagen and **Legoland** (p281) in Jutland. The latter is a delight for younger children but quite possibly a cue for eye rolling and tutting from more worldly-wise teenagers. Rather than offering a dedicated route to follow, we suggest you think of the following as holidays from your holiday when the constant pestering nagging just gets too much.

The beaches on North Zealand's northern coast from **Tisvildeleje** (p129) to Rågeleje are family oriented; the water is gentle and the kids will find plenty of playmates.

History always goes down easier when you can touch things. With that in mind, kid-friendly Museum Island at the **Viking Ship Museum** (p132) in Roskilde and the **Viking fortress** (p147) at Trelleborg, both in central Zealand, should fire their imaginations.

For a taste of African wildlife take the toddlers to **Knuthenborg Safari Park** (p180) in north central Lolland, and you might as well pop down to enormous **Lalandia Water Park** (p180) near Rødby in southern Lolland. Even if it's not hot, the combination of water and slides brings out the juvenile in all of us.





# On the Road



## ANDREW STONE *Coordinating Author*

Denmark's sense of history, the way distant epochs take on a compelling immediacy, still surprises me on return visits. You'll understand if you visit the Tollund Man in his eternal slumber in Silkeborg. Copenhagen is my other abiding pleasure; it might just be the perfect European city.



## CAROLYN BAIN

I escaped small-town Australia as a teenager to live here for a year, and after that first taste of travel, of European history, of mastering a language (kind of), I was hooked. On return visits I never fail to be bowled over by Danish openness and hospitality, plus the locals' impeccable taste in design and their innate sense of all that is *hyggelig*.



## MICHAEL BOOTH

In Denmark, things work, it's safe and clean, the locals speak better English than I do, and it is just so easy to find your way around – especially in Copenhagen. It may not be the most adventurous travel destination, but if you are looking for a challenge you could always try the pickled herring in curry sauce...



## FRAN PARNELL

Denmark is synonymous with Vikings and I was lucky enough to visit three tremendous archaeological sites. For chills, descend into the Ladbykibet burial mound to see Denmark's only Viking ship grave. For mystification, there's the mass cemetery at Trelleborg ring fort. For pure poetry, admire the reconstructed longships at Roskilde, which seem to float on the fjord.

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