

Southern Zealand



Towns in this nontouristy region are primarily modern, and most people shoot through them on their way to the southern beaches or to Jutland. However, there are nuggets of gold to be panned from the gravel.

Køge is the prettiest town in the area, a delightfully preserved cobbled place, with a medieval church and half-timbered houses straight from the lid of a chocolate box. Nearby is the adorable hamlet of Vallø, with a fairy-tale moated castle complete with frogs on lily pads. The third historical settlement worth your time is Sorø, again rich in history and tilted wooden homes.

Viking fans have a gem in the remains of 1000-year-old Trelleborg, the best-preserved ring fortress in Scandinavia. It's an evocative site, deep in Denmark's rural heart and pretty much unencumbered by modern buildings and roads – squint, and you can almost believe yourself back in Harald Bluetooth's time.

If you have kids, then Næstved is a must. Within a radius of 10km you'll find the theme park BonBon-Land; FantasyLand, an indoor playground for younger kids; Holmegaard Glassworks, where your young 'uns can engrave their names on glass or blow their own masterpiece; Næstved Zoo; and child-friendly beaches at Karrebæksminde.

The triangular region between Næstved in the south and Sorø and Korsør to the north is spotted with forests, small lakes and streams, as close to undomesticated nature as you'll find in Zealand. Hire a canoe in Næstved and explore the waterways at your leisure.

If you're travelling across the region between Køge and Korsør using your own transport, the rural Rte 150 makes an excellent alternative to zipping along on the E20 motorway.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ride the Wild Boar rollercoaster, voted the best in Denmark, at the BonBon-Land theme park near **Næstved** (p152)
- Puzzle over the enigmatic remains of the Viking ring fortress at **Trelleborg** (p147)
- Treat your loved one to a weekend at the romantic cliff-top hotel in **Præstø** (p154)
- Admire the medieval town of **Køge** (p138) – its narrow streets of half-timbered buildings hide Denmark's oldest house
- Kiss a frog outside the fairy-tale castle at **Vallø** (p142), and see if it turns into a prince!



Getting There & Around

Like that of North Zealand, the transportation system in Southern Zealand is linked to Copenhagen and just about all of the region can be reached in an hour from the capital. Having your own transport is more important, though, since the destinations are more scattered than in the north and a good amount of the region's appeal lies in the pastoral scenery witnessed as you travel through.

KØGE

pop 34,476

The country's largest town square sits at the heart of Køge, creating an open, relaxed feel from the off. The main joy here is to wan-

der the narrow cobbled streets containing Denmark's best-preserved 17th- and 18th-century buildings. Add in a decent array of independent shops and tempting restaurants, and your maximum walking speed will be a lazy amble.

Køge is also a thriving fishing and trade centre. There are narrow beaches along the bay to the north and south of town, although you'll need to ignore the somewhat industrial backdrop of the modern commercial harbour.

In 1677 a vital naval engagement was fought in the waters off Køge. Known as the Battle of Køge Bay, it made a legend of Danish admiral Niels Juel, who resoundingly defeated the attacking Swedish navy.

