

welcome to Denmark



Happiness & Hygge

It's heart-warming to know there's still a country where the term 'fairy tale' can be used freely – from its most enduring literary legacy to its fine textbook castles. In a nutshell, Denmark gets it right: old-fashioned charm embraces the most awowedly forward-looking design and social developments, and wins it a regular chart-topping place on lists of both the most liveable *and* the happiest nations on earth. You won't have to search hard to find some much-prized *hygge*, an untranslatable and uniquely Danish trait that has a profound influence on the locals' inestimable happiness. *Hygge* is social nirvana in Denmark: a sense of cosiness, camaraderie and con-

tentment, when the worries of the world have been set aside.

Quality of Life

The world first took notice of Denmark more than a millennium ago, when Danish Vikings took to the seas and ravaged vast tracts of Europe. How things have changed! These days Denmark is regarded as the epitome of a civilised society, and it punches well above its weight on many fronts: progressive politics, urban planning, sustainability, design, architecture, film and literature – and now cuisine, thanks to the food world's latest crush, the New Nordic culinary movement.

Vikings, Hans Christian Andersen, Lego and now New Nordic cuisine – this is a small country with some big claims – a place that’s perfected the art of living well.

(left) Country home near Egeskov Slot, Funen. (below) Colourful facades of Christianshavn, Copenhagen



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While many other countries are noticeable for the ever-increasing gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’, Denmark seems to be populated by the ‘have enoughts’, and the obviously rich and obviously poor are few and far between. This egalitarian spirit allows the best of the arts, architecture, eating and entertainment to be within easy reach of all. Indeed, the catchword for Denmark might well be ‘inclusive’ – everyone is welcome, everyone is catered to, be they young, old, gay, straight, male, female, and whether they travel with kids, pets or bikes in tow, or with a mobility issue or handicap. Cities are compact and user-friendly, infrastructure is clean and modern, and travel is a breeze.

The Danish Aesthetic

It’s true, Denmark doesn’t have the stop-you-in-your-tracks natural grandeur of its neighbours, but its landscapes are understated – pure and simple, often infused with an ethereal Nordic light. Such landscapes are reflected in the Danish design philosophy towards fashion, food, architecture, furniture and art. Simplicity of form and function come first, but not at the expense of beauty. And so you’ll find moments of quintessential Danish loveliness on a long sandy beach, beside a lake, admiring a Renaissance castle, on the bike lanes of Bornholm, or in a candlelit cafe that has perfected the art of *hygge*.