

Denmark

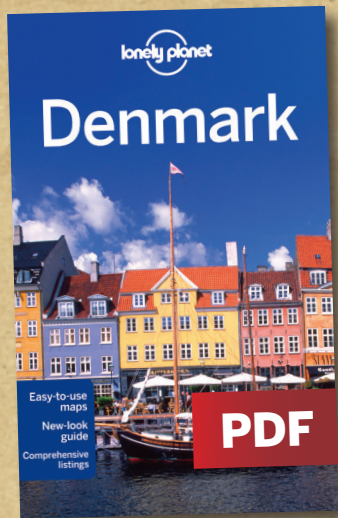
Zealand

(Chapter)

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Coverage includes: Øresund Coast, Rungsted, Helsingør, Hillerød, Fredensborg, North Coast, Hornbæk, Gilleleje, Tisvildeleje, Fjord Towns, Roskilde, Lejre, Southern Zealand, Køge, Vallø, Sorø, Trelleborg, Næstved & Around and Vordingborg.

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Zealand

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Why Go?

Denmark's largest island offers much more than the dazzle of Copenhagen. North of the city lie some of the country's finest beaches, quaintest fishing villages and vainest castles. Here you'll find Helsingør's hulking Kronborg Slot and Hillerød's sublimely romantic Frederiksborg Slot.

West of Copenhagen awaits history-steeped Roskilde, home to a World Heritage-listed cathedral, Scandinavia's top rock music festival and the superb Viking Ship Museum. History also comes to life at nearby Sagnlandet Lejre, an engrossing, hands-on archaeology site.

Further west stands the millennia-old Trelleborg ring fortress, while Zealand's southern assets include medieval Køge, fairy-tale hamlet Vallø and Næstved's hair-raising theme park.

Much of Zealand is easy to get around, and (bonus!) the Copenhagen Card allows free public transport and admission to many attractions.

When to Go

Between June and August are the best times to visit Zealand. The weather is at its warmest, the countryside is a luxuriant green, and the region's gorgeous north coast is at its most enticing. Tourist offices and attractions are in full swing, and world-class cultural events such as July's Roskilde Festival bring some of the world's top performers. The downside is that you won't be the only one soaking up the sun, sea and culture. Most Danes take their holiday in July, making coastal towns particularly crowded and accommodation scarce. Book ahead.

Outside of summer, May and September are your next best bets, with mild weather, fewer crowds, and most attractions open at full capacity.

i Getting There & Away

Most of northern Zealand can be reached from Copenhagen in less than an hour – quicker if you have your own transport. The Copenhagen Card (see p81) can be used for many bus or train trips in the area.

Frequent trains head northwards from Copenhagen, but take bus 388 from Klampenborg (the last stop on the C line of the S-train system) north to Helsingør for beautiful coastal views. Helsingør train station handles both DSB trains and the privately operated Lokalbansen, which runs a regional service in north Zealand.

The transportation system in the southern part of Zealand is also well linked to Copenhagen and just about all of it can be reached in an hour from the capital. This said, having your own transport is more important down south, since the destinations are more scattered than in the north and a good amount of the region's appeal lies in its pastoral scenery.

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.

i Getting Around

A joint zone fare system (24kr per zone travelled) embraces all Copenhagen buses, DSB/State Railway and S-trains in metropolitan Copenhagen, northern Zealand and as far south as Køge, as well as some privately operated railway routes in the area (within an approximately 40km radius of Copenhagen). It's possible to change between train and bus routes on the same ticket.

Depending on the number of zones crossed, it's often cheaper and more convenient to purchase a 24-hour ticket (all zones adult/child 12 to 15 years 130/65kr), or a seven-day FlexCard (all zones 590kr).

To reach most of the north coast you must switch trains in either Hillerød or Helsingør.

The main east-west train line between Copenhagen and Odense cuts across the central part of Zealand, servicing towns such as Sorø and Korsør. The main north-south route runs from Copenhagen to and from Nykøbing F on Falster, servicing the major southern towns of Køge and Vordingborg.

Many of the train routes in southern Zealand are privately run, and buses usually connect stations to towns and villages not serviced by train. For all public transport routes, timetables and prices, click onto the very useful www.rejseplan.dk.

ØRESUND COAST

This area is sometimes grandly referred to as the Danish Riviera, thanks to its expensive seaside mansions. However, it's a slightly misleading name – if you're dreaming of golden beaches, head for the north coast. The main attractions on north Zealand's eastern shore are two excellent museums, and the town of Helsingør, famous for its beast of a castle, Kronborg Slot.

The Øresund itself is the sound that separates Denmark from Sweden, just across the water.

Rungsted

If you're a fan of the fantastical, erotic, mordant writings of Karen Blixen (1885–1962), the coastal town of Rungsted holds a treat. Here you can visit Rungstedlund, Blixen's Danish estate, now a museum dedicated to her life and work. A little north of here is the Louisiana art gallery, see p81.

i Sights

Karen Blixen Museet

MUSEUM

(www.karen-blixen.dk; Rungsted Strandvej 111; adult/under 14yr 60kr/free; ☀10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 1-4pm Wed-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr) Karen Blixen's former home in Rungsted is now the Karen Blixen museum. Fans of her writing will appreciate how it remains much the way she left it with photographs, Masai spears, paintings, shields and other mementoes of her time in Africa, such as the gramophone given to Blixen by her lover Denys Finch-Hatton. On her desk is the old Corona typewriter she used to write her novels.

One wing of the museum houses a library of Blixen's books, a cafe, bookshop and an audiovisual presentation on her life. The wooded grounds, set aside as a bird sanctuary, contain Blixen's **grave**, a simple stone slab inscribed with her name.

The museum is opposite the busy yacht harbour, 1.5km from the train station. Walk north up Stationsvej, turn right at the lights onto Rungstedvej and then, at its intersection with Rungsted Strandvej, walk south about 300m. See also the boxed text, p88.

i Getting There & Away

Trains to Rungsted run every 20 minutes from Copenhagen (84kr, 30 minutes) and Helsingør (60kr, 25 minutes).

Zealand Highlights

- 1 Are you in Denmark or the south of France? Ponder the question on the wide golden beach at **Hornbæk** (p97)
- 2 Snoop around the immense bastion **Kronborg Slot** (p88), setting for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
- 3 Continue the castle odyssey at lakeside **Frederiksborg Slot** (p94), one of Denmark's finest historic buildings
- 4 Let your child run free with an axe at the Iron Age settlement at **Lejre** (p106)
- 5 Party hard at northern Europe's largest rock music festival in **Roskilde** (see the boxed text, p104)





- 6** Ride the Wild Boar rollercoaster at BonBon-Land theme park near **Næstved** (p119)
- 7** Puzzle over the enigmatic remains of the Viking ring fortress at **Trelleborg** (p116)
- 8** Lose yourself in the narrow, medieval streets of **Køge** (p107), home to Denmark's oldest house
- 9** Escape to the fairy-tale hamlet of **Vallo** (p112)

OUT OF RUNGSTED

Karen Blixen (1885–1962) was born in Rungsted, a well-to-do community north of Copenhagen, as Karen Christenze Dinesen. Throughout her life, this unusual woman created an aura of eccentricity around herself, trying on different names, fictionalising her own life, and causing controversy with her 'decadent' writings.

In 1914, aged 28 and eager to escape the confines of her bourgeois family, she married her second cousin Baron Bror von Blixen-Finecke, after having a failed love affair with his twin brother Hans. It was a marriage of convenience – she wanted his title and he needed her money.

The couple moved to Kenya and started a coffee plantation, which Karen was left to manage. It was here that she was diagnosed with syphilis, contracted through the womanising baron (although it's possible that her ill health was caused by arsenic poisoning, taken as medicine for the syphilis she feared she had). The diagnosis was especially damaging psychologically since her father had committed suicide after contracting syphilis when Karen was 10 years old. Blixen came home to Denmark for medical treatment, then returned to Africa and divorced the baron in 1925.

She then lived with the great love of her life, Englishman Denys Finch-Hatton, for six years, until he died in a tragic plane crash in 1932. The couple were played by Meryl Streep and Robert Redford in the Oscar-winning film adaptation of *Out of Africa*, Blixen's autobiography. Soon after his death Blixen left Africa, returning to the family estate in Rungsted where she began to write. Denmark was slow to appreciate her, in part because she used an old-fashioned idiomatic style, wrote approvingly about the aristocracy and insisted on being addressed as 'Baroness' in a country bent on minimising class disparity.

Blixen's first book of short stories, *Seven Gothic Tales*, was published in New York in 1934 under the pseudonym Isak Dinesen. It was only after the book became immensely successful in the USA that Danish publishers took a serious interest.

After the commercial success of *Out of Africa* in both Danish and English, other books followed: *Winter's Tales* (1942), *The Angelic Avengers* (1944), *Last Tales* (1957), *Anecdotes of Destiny* (1958) and *Shadows on the Grass* (1960). Another Oscar-winning film, *Babette's Feast*, was based on her story about culinary artistry in small-town Denmark (see p311).

Helsingør

POP 46,280

The main sight at the busy port town of Helsingør (Elsinore) is imposing Kronborg Slot, a brute of a castle that dominates the narrowest point of the Øresund. It was made famous as Elsinore Castle in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, although the intimate psychological nature of the play is a far cry from the military colossus squatting on the shore.

Helsingør is full of pedestrianised historic streets, just made for ambling along with an ice cream. They contain a delightful collection of half-timbered houses, Gothic churches and a medieval cloister, interspersed with interesting shops and good cafes.

Frequent ferries shuttle the short trip to and from Sweden, filled with Swedes on a mission to buy cheap (at least for them) Danish alcohol.

Sights

 **Kronborg Slot**

CASTLE

(www.ses.dk/en/SlotteOgHaver/Slotte/Kronborg; Kronborgvej; Royal Apartments, Casements & Chapel, Maritime Museum & Telegraph Tower adult/15-18yr/6-14yr 95/70/25kr; ☎10.30am-5pm May-Sep, 11am-4pm Tue-Sun Apr & Oct, reduced hrs rest of year) The monstrous military bulk of Kronborg Slot is a Unesco World Heritage Site, and top of the town's sightseeing list. Despite the attention it has received as the setting of *Hamlet*, the castle's real function was far less romantic – it acted as a formidable tollhouse. Imagine sitting in the Øresund with the cannons of Kronborg aimed squarely at your creaking ship, and you can understand how wonderfully effective the castle was in its tax-gathering purpose.

The Danish king Erik of Pomerania demonstrated excellent business sense in the 1420s, when he built a small fortress, Kro-

gen, at the narrowest part of the Øresund and then charged cargo ships one rose noble (a type of English gold coin) for sailing past. The 'sound dues' generated plenty of cash, enabling Frederik II to enlarge Krogen into Kronborg Slot in 1585.

Not long after the workmen had packed up tools, a devastating fire ravaged the castle in 1629, leaving nothing but the outer walls. The tireless builder-king Christian IV rebuilt Kronborg, preserving the castle's earlier Renaissance style and adding his own baroque touches, but soon afterwards disaster struck again. During the Danish-Swedish wars, the Swedes occupied Kronborg from 1658 to 1660, looting everything of value including its famous fountain.

Following the Swedish attack, Christian IV bulked up Kronborg's defences, but the Danish royals gave up trying to make the castle a home. The building became a barracks from 1785 until 1924, when it became a museum (the Swedish government sportingly returning some looted items).

Although it costs to enter the interior, you can cross several swan-filled moats and walk into the dramatic courtyard free of charge, or make a circumnavigation of the castle's mighty sea barriers (open daily until sunset), a good picnic spot.

Royal Apartments

The Royal Apartments are rather empty today: the king's and queen's chambers, for example, have little in them but marble fireplaces, a few sticks of furniture, and some lavish ceiling paintings, although occasional modern-art exhibitions add an interesting dimension.

The most impressive room is the ballroom, the longest in Scandinavia when it was built in 1585. Banquets held here consisted of 65 courses, and each guest was given their own vomiting bucket. Seven of the tapestries that originally adorned the walls – in excellent condition, and with interesting explanations alongside – can be seen in the adjoining Little Hall.

Casements & Chapel

The chilly, low-ceilinged dungeon, which also served as storerooms and soldiers' quarters, stretches underneath a surprisingly large area of the castle. It's suitably dark and creepy, although you'll make better sense of its empty rooms if you read up on barracks life before heading downwards. Delights include nesting bats, and a statue of the Viking chief **Holger Danske** (Ogier the Dane), who, legend says, will wake and come to Denmark's aid in its hour of need.

The galleried chapel was the only part of Kronborg that escaped the flames in 1629, and gives a good impression of the castle's original appearance. Highlights include the gilt-covered altar and freakish faces decorating the pews.

Handels- og Søfartsmuseet

(Danish Maritime Museum; www.maritime-museum.dk) Tracing Denmark's maritime past and overseas colonies, Handels- og Søfartsmuseet, running round three whole sides of the courtyard, is worth a visit. This collection of model ships, paintings, nautical instruments and sea charts helps one to appreciate the impact of the sea on Danish culture and history. It also contains the world's oldest ship biscuit, c 1852 – which looks peculiarly edible.

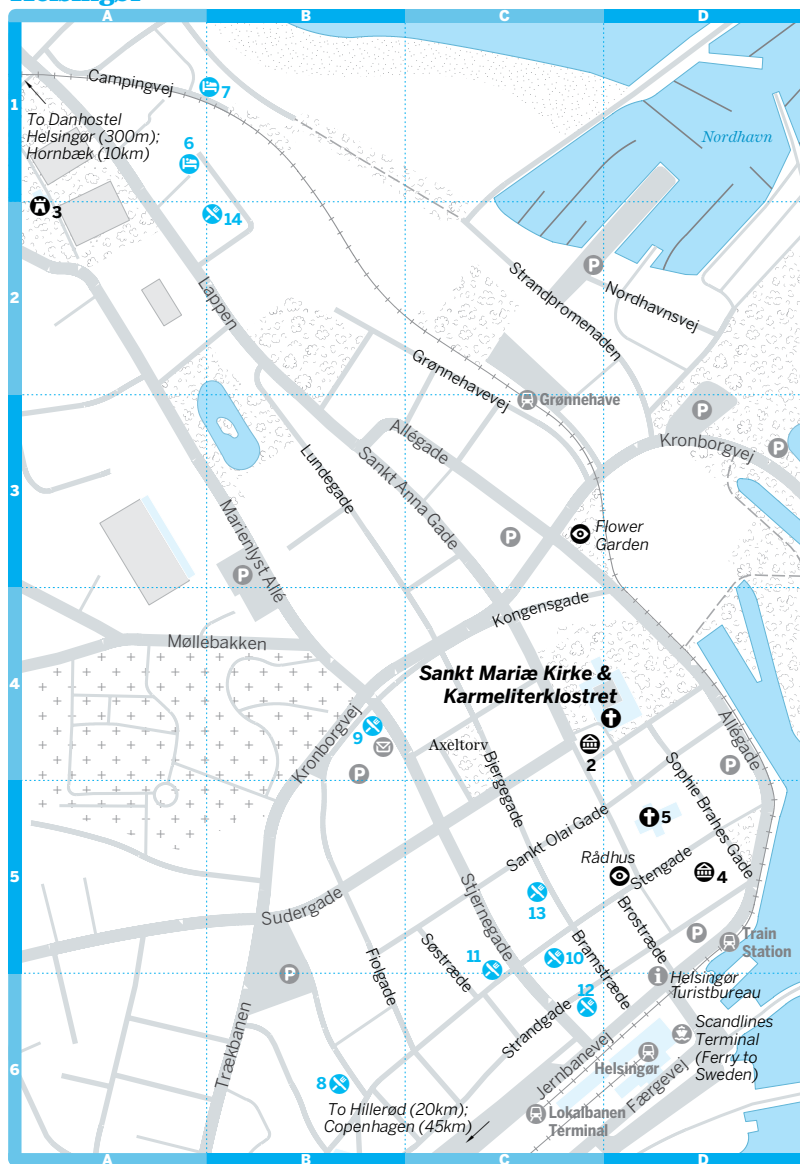
TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602) is set in Kronborg Slot in Helsingør ('Elsinore'). Despite the vividness of the play, the Bard had never set foot in Denmark. It's possible that he gleaned details of the imposing new castle from a group of English players who performed in Helsingør in 1585, the year that Kronborg was completed. Shakespeare also included two actual Danish noblemen, Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstjerne (Guildenstern), who visited the English court in the 1590s.

Although the remaining characters are based on a story that was 800 years old in Shakespeare's time, audiences were utterly convinced of the play's authenticity. English merchants trading in Helsingør would visit the castle out of respect for Hamlet: so many visitors wanted to know where the indecisive Dane was buried that 'Hamlet's grave' was built in the grounds of Marienlyst Slot.

Performances of *Hamlet* take place in Kronborg's courtyard every August, from straight-up RSC versions to Chinese-opera interpretations – check www.hamletscenen.dk to see what's coming up.

Helsingør

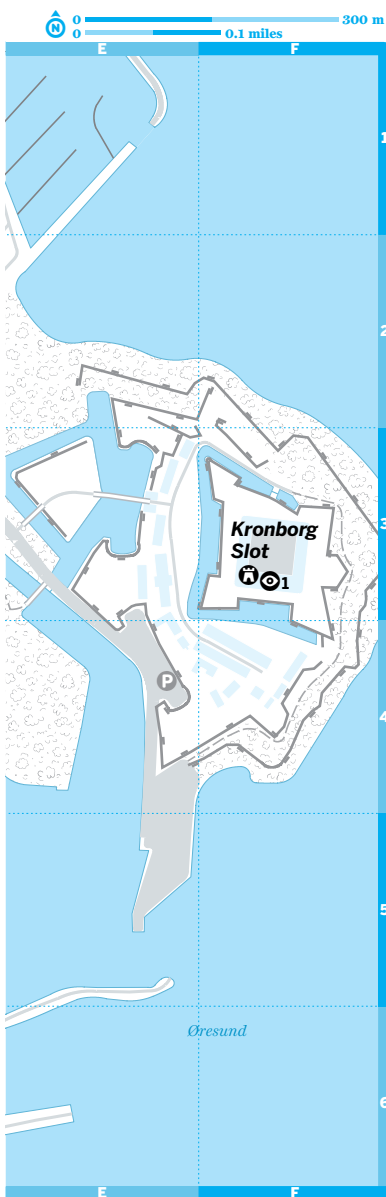


You can see the remains of the original Krogen fortress in the masonry of rooms 21 and 22; and it's worth the admission price to climb the winding staircase of the teetering **Telegraph Tower** for superb views.

Sankt Mariæ Kirke & Karmeliterklostret

CHURCH, MONASTERY

(www.sctmariae.dk; Sankt Anna Gade 38; ☎10am-3pm Tue-Sun) The medieval church of Sankt Mariæ Kirke contains some quite spiffy 15th-century frescoes. Alongside standard



Helsingør

📍 Top Sights

Kronborg Slot	F3
Sankt Mariæ Kirke & Karmeliterklostret	D4

📍 Sights

1 Handels-og Søfartsmuseet.....	F3
2 Helsingør Bymuseum.....	C4
3 Marienlyst Slot.....	A2
4 Museet Skibsklarerergaarden.....	D5
5 Sankt Olai Domkirke.....	D5

🏠 Sleeping

6 Helsingør Camping Grønnehave.....	A1
7 Marienlyst Hotel & Casino	B1

🍴 Eating

8 Café Vivaldi	B6
9 Kvikly Supermarket.....	B4
10 Madame Sprunc	C5
11 Møllers Conditori.....	C6
12 Rådmand Davids Hus	C6
13 Slagter Baagø	C5
14 Spar Supermarket.....	B2

Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707), a baroque composer who greatly influenced Bach; the frequent organ concerts are attended by aficionados.

Sankt Mariæ Kirke is attached to one of Scandinavia's best-preserved medieval monasteries, **Karmeliterklostret** (Carmelite monastery; ☺tours 2pm Fri & Sat mid-Jun–mid-Sep), a soothing place of red brick and whitewash. Christian II's mistress, Dyveke (c 1490–1517), is thought to have been buried here.

Sankt Olai Domkirke

CATHEDRAL

(Sankt Anna Gade 12; admission free; ☺10am–4pm May–Aug, 10am–2pm Sep–Apr) Surrounded by lime trees, Sankt Olai Domkirke is a handsome red-brick Gothic cathedral built in 1559. Unusual features include an over-the-top white-and-gold altarpiece (one of Denmark's largest at 12m high), an ominous black stone slab where the names of wrongdoers were written, and, wedged in an archway, an English cannonball fired en route to the Battle of Copenhagen (1801).

Helsingør Bymuseum

MUSEUM

(Sankt Anna Gade 36; adult/child 20kr/free; ☺noon–4pm Tue–Fri & Sun, 10am–2pm Sat) One block north of the cathedral is Helsingør Bymuseum, built by the monks of the adjacent monastery in 1516 to serve as a

biblical scenes are bizarre faces from whose mouths spring frogs, foxes, bulls and rams, while in the southern aisle pipers and lute players burst from giant flowers.

There's also an ornate rococo gallery and a 17th-century organ, which was played by

sailors' hospital. There's a detailed model of 19th-century Helsingør, with an interesting 15-minute recording about the town's history in Danish, Swedish, German and English. There's also a hotchpotch of exhibits (old chemists' bottles, medieval pottery finds, 200 dolls) labelled mainly in Danish.

Museet Skibsklarerergaarden MUSEUM
(Strandgade 91; admission 30kr, entry by Danish guided tour only, on the hour; ☀noon-4pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat, last tour 1hr before closing) This higgledy-piggledy shipping agent's house is steeped in seafaring history: while the agent checked cargo and filled out paperwork in the office, ships' captains could stock up on supplies, have a meal, or catch forty winks in the attic. Unfortunately the 50-minute tours are in Danish only, but pop into the spicy-smelling 18th-century shop, and buy a beer brewed in the tiny backyard.

Danmarks Tekniske Museum MUSEUM
(www.tekniskmuseum.dk; Fabriksvej 25; adult/child 65kr/free; ☀10am-5pm Tue-Sun) Southwest of the centre on an industrial estate, Danmarks Tekniske Museum displays innovative technological inventions from the late 19th and early 20th centuries: early gramophones, radios, motor vehicles and aeroplanes. The latter includes a 1906 Danish-built aeroplane that, it's claimed, was the first plane flown in Europe (it stayed airborne for 11 seconds!). The museum is a 15-minute ride away on bus 805, in the direction of Espergærde.

Marienlyst Slot HISTORIC BUILDING
(Marienlyst Allé 32; adult/child 30kr/free; ☀noon-4pm Tue-Sun) About 1.5km northwest of town is Marienlyst Slot, a stately neoclassical manor house built in 1763, set back in a manicured garden ablaze with rhododendrons. Inside there's a small collection of silverware and 19th-century paintings of Helsingør and Hornbæk, including one on the 2nd floor that's half Venice and half Copenhagen.

'Hamlet's grave' can be found in the parkland behind the house, added because every good romantic garden should provoke melancholic thoughts; and as a tourist attraction for visiting English merchants convinced that Hamlet was real.

At the time of research, Marienlyst Slot was closed for restoration work.

The Hornbæk-bound train stops at Marienlyst station, 100m north of the manor house.

Hammermøllen HISTORIC BUILDING
(www.hammermollen.dk, in Danish; Bøsseremagsgade 21; adult/child 10/5kr; ☀11am-5pm Thu & Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) If you don't have a pressing itinerary, consider cycling to Hammermøllen, about 5km west in Hellebæk. This picturesque old smithy was founded by Christian IV in 1765 to hammer out cannons for his battleships, and has also served as a copper mill and textile mill. Admire the thatched roof and waterwheels, and kick back with coffee and cake.

Sleeping

Marienlyst Hotel & Casino HOTEL €€
(☎49 21 40 00; www.marienlyst.dk; N Strandvej 2; s 950-1425kr, d 1150-1625kr; P @ ☎ ☎) Helsingør's four-star hotel stretches along the seafront, and is practically a self-contained holiday centre, with two restaurants, bars, its own casino and a swimming pool. Rooms are tastefully neutral, with sleek white bathrooms; those with sea views cost around 175kr more.

Danhostel Helsingør HOSTEL €
(☎49 21 16 40; www.helsingorhostel.dk; Nordre Strandvej 24; dm 195kr, r without/with bathroom 350/475kr; P @ ☎) This 180-bed hostel is based in a coastal manor house 2km northwest of town, on a little beach looking directly across to Sweden. The run-of-the-mill dorms have up to 10 beds and are in one of the smaller attached buildings. Facilities include a self-catering kitchen, small playground and outdoor ping-pong tables to keep kids amused. From Helsingør, bus 842 (24kr) will get you there.

Helsingør Camping Grønnehav CAMPING GROUND, CABINS €
(☎49 28 49 50; www.helsingorcamping.dk; Strandalleen 2; camp site per person 60kr; ☀year-round) It's a pleasant, low-key, two-star camping ground on the beach approximately 1.5km northwest of the town centre, Grønnehav, has a shop, laundry, and bike hire for 75kr per day. Cabins are also available (five-/six-person cabin 1300/1995kr per week). To get here, take bus 842.

Eating

There's a cluster of restaurants and beer gardens around the main square, Axeltorv. For coffee and cake, head for pedestrianised Stengade.

**Rådmand Davids Hus**

CAFE ☐

(Strandgade 70; mains 80kr; ☺10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat) We love this popular cafe, with sunny staff, contained within a lopsided 17th-century half-timbered house. Traditional Danish food (nothing for vegetarians) is served up either in the cosy, crooked interior or the cobbled courtyard, bursting with greenery. The special is the 'shopping lunch' (79kr), typically a generous plate of salad, salmon pâté, and slices of lamb, cheese and homemade ryebread.

Madame Sprunck

INTERNATIONAL ☐☐

(Stengade 48F; 2-course lunch/dinner 160/188kr; ☺lunch & dinner) Another great old building, with seating in a candlelit wooden interior or charming mustard-yellow courtyard. Food is a mixture of Danish, French and Mexican – everything from burgers to more sophisticated dishes such as steamed mussels in elderflower and white wine.

Café Vivaldi

INTERNATIONAL ☐☐

(Stengade 9; sandwiches 89-99kr, dinner mains 129-199kr; ☺lunch & dinner) This popular, mock 'French bistro' cafe serves standard (albeit tasty) grub in a relaxed environment. The menu spans nachos, omelettes, salads and quiches to more substantial evening mains – steaks, burritos and pasta dishes. Live music adds to the buzz at weekends.

Møllers Konditori

BAKERY ☐

(Stengade 39; smørrebrød 55-65kr; ☺11.30am-5.30pm) Denmark's oldest *konditori* (bak-

ery with cafe tables) has outdoor seats on bustling Stengade, a prime site for people-watching. Nibble on succulent pastries, fresh bread rolls or smørrebrød (open sandwiches) as you watch the passing crowds.

Slagter Baagø

DELI ☐

(Bjergegade 3; smørrebrød 14-38kr; ☺9am-5.30pm Tue-Thu, to 6pm Fri, to 2pm Sat) Self-caterers and picnickers can pick freshly prepared edibles from this deli.

There's a **Spar** (Lappen; ☺7.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, 7to 2pm Sat, 8am-noon Sun) supermarket near the camping ground, and a **Kvickly** (Stjernerogade 25; ☺9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat) supermarket and bakery west of Axeltorv.

i Information

Danske Bank (Stengade 55) One of many banks and ATMs.

Helsingør Turistbureau (☎49 21 13 33; www.visitnordsjaelland.com; Havnepladsen 3; ☺10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat & Sun late Jun-early Aug, reduced hrs rest of year)

Library (Allégade 2; ☺10am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat) Free internet access.

Post office (Stjernerogade 25; ☺10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat) Inside the Kvickly supermarket building.

i Getting There & Away

BOAT For information on ferries to Helsingborg in Sweden (person/car plus nine passengers 54/690kr return, 20 minutes), see p326.

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO TYCHO

It was on the island of Hven, in the sound between Denmark and Sweden, that the 16th-century Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe sought to collect evidence that the sun and moon revolved around the earth. Although he was wrong – and proven so by Johannes Kepler, his former assistant – Brahe's meticulous observations and calculations were still significant achievements and influenced Kepler's later findings. He was the first to measure planetary movement, and designed instrumentation light years more sophisticated than his predecessors.

While Brahe's mind may have been on the stars, his ambitions were decidedly worldly. Part of his nose was sliced off in a duel, reputedly over claims that his opponent was a better mathematician. He subsequently replaced the damaged organ with a copper one.

To prevent Brahe from being lured away from Denmark, King Frederik II gave Hven to the astronomer and financed the building of Uraniborg, an observatory, alchemical laboratory and castle. After falling out with Frederik's son Christian IV, Brahe closed down the observatory in 1597, and left Denmark for good two years later.

Unfortunately, Brahe's next appointment, as Imperial Mathematician to the Holy Roman Emperor, didn't last long – he died in Prague in 1601. It was long thought that his death was the result of holding in his urine for too long at a royal banquet, but recent investigations suggest that he may have died from mercury poisoning.

CAR Helsingør is 64km north of Copenhagen and 24km northeast of Hillerød. There's free parking throughout the city, including northeast of the tourist office, west of Kvickly supermarket and outside Kronborg Slot.

TRAIN Helsingør train station has two adjacent terminals: the DSB terminal for national trains and the smaller Lokalbansen terminal for the private railway that runs along the north coast.

Trains to Copenhagen (108kr, 45 minutes) run about three times hourly from early morning to around midnight. Trains to Hillerød (via Fredensborg 72kr, 30 minutes) run at least once hourly until around midnight.

The Lokalbansen train from Helsingør to Gilleleje (72kr, 40 minutes) via Hornbæk (36kr, 25 minutes) runs once to twice hourly until around midnight.

INLAND TOWNS

In the heart of Zealand lie Hillerød and Fredensborg, two small towns built around magnificent – and very different – royal residences. You're free to roam the ornate rooms and soaring towers of the castle at Hillerød, whereas the interior of the more modest palace at Fredensborg is only open in July the rest of the year, it's the beautiful lakeside gardens that are the main draw.

Hillerød

POP 30,350

Christian IV sure knew how to build a castle. Hillerød, 30km north of Copenhagen, is a pleasant modern market town, whose glorious palace elevates it to 'must visit' status. Frederiksborg Slot, sitting on a nest of islands in the middle of an attractive lake, is a vision of copper turrets and baroque gardens, and one of the most impressive attractions in the region.

Hillerød is also a transport hub for north Zealand, with train connections for the beaches on the north coast. The train station is about 500m from the town centre.

👁 Sights

TOP CHOICE **Frederiksborg Slot** CASTLE
(www.frederiksborgmuseet.dk; Slotsgade 1; adult/student/6-15yr/family 60/50/15/120kr; ☀️10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 11am-3pm Nov-Mar) Combining history, beauty and strength, the impressive Dutch Renaissance-styled Frederiksborg Slot spreads across three islets on the castle lake, Slotsø.

The oldest part of Frederiksborg Slot dates from the reign of Frederik II, after whom it is named. His son Christian IV was born here; most of the present structure was built by Christian in the early 17th century and can be seen as his homage to a place to which he had a deep attachment. Both kings used Frederiksborg as their royal seat; but after Hillerød suffered plague, fire and rampaging Swedes during the 17th century, the throne moved to quieter Fredensborg in the 18th century.

Frederiksborg Slot was ravaged by flames in 1859, and the royal family, unable to undertake the costly repairs, decided to give it up. Carlsberg beer baron JC Jacobsen spearheaded a drive to restore the castle as a national museum, a function it fulfils today.

The Interior

The sprawling castle has a magnificent interior boasting gilded ceilings, wall-sized tapestries and fine paintings, with 70 of its rooms open to the public. The **Slotskirken** (Coronation Chapel) is the most dazzling. It was spared serious fire damage and retains the original interior commissioned by Christian IV – a crazed confection of curling gold, pink-cheeked cherubs, and a silver pulpit and altarpiece. Danish monarchs were crowned in the chapel from 1671 to 1840, the perfect setting for such pomp and circumstance. You can hear the sound of the 17th century each Thursday between 1.30pm and 2pm, when the priceless **Compenius organ** (1610) is played, or at free concerts every Sunday at 5pm in July and August.

Also fairly intact is the **Audience Chamber**, an eye-boggling room containing trompe l'oeil details, a self-indulgent portrait of big-nosed Christian V posing as a Roman emperor, and best of all, a 17th-century elevator chair, which enabled the king to rise graciously through the floor!

Other rooms were restored to their original appearances in the 19th century. The richly embellished **Riddershalen** (Knights Hall), once the dining room, is particularly striking – check out the stucco friezes of deer, embedded with real antlers. Also impressive is the **Great Hall**, a vast ballroom complete with minstrels' gallery, fine tapestries and vivid ceiling paintings.

The rest of the 1st and 2nd floors contain the **Museum of National History**, a chronologically arranged portrait gallery of kings, noblemen and olden-day celebrities, interspersed with unusual pieces of furniture.

DENMARK'S MOST HAUNTED...

Esrum Kloster (www.esrum.dk; Klostergade, Esrum; adult/under 16yr 50kr/free; ☺10.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-late Oct, 11am-4pm Thu-Sun mid-Oct-Apr), a monastery 15km north of Hillerød, has a juicy ghost story attached about the demonic Brother Rus, who was employed as the monastery's cook in the 16th century. Wicked old Rus served up decadent dishes and lashings of sinful wine to his fellow monks, in between chasing the serving wenches round the kitchen and having late-night chats with Satan.

Word of this evil-doing got back to the abbot, who had Brother Rus tortured to death on his own cooking grill (on view in the monastery today). A splatter of his blood has defied all attempts to wash it off, and the damned monk has been spotted wandering the monastery in the dead of night.

Bus 390R from Helsingør to Helsingør runs past the monastery.

It's a lot to digest in one go – you might be better off concentrating on the time periods that interest you.

On the 3rd floor is the **Moderne Samling** (Modern Collection), a large collection of 20th-century paintings and photography.

Slotshaven

The castle gardens lie to the north. The formal **baroque garden** (☺10am-sunset), visible from the castle windows and made up of perfect terraces and immaculately manicured yew and box, demonstrates that even nature must bend to a king's will. There's also a Romantic garden, **Indelukket**, where 18th-century rigidity melts into a wilder 19th-century notion of gardening. North again is the oak wood of **Lille Dyrehave**, which was planted to provide material for boat-building after the Danish fleet was confiscated by England in 1807. You could easily spend a pleasant hour's outing strolling through the three sections.

The Slotsø Ferry

From mid-May to mid-September, the little **Frederiksborg ferry** (adult/child 30/10kr) makes a 30-minute round-trip of the castle lake between 11am and 5pm Monday to Saturday, and between 1pm and 5pm on Sunday. It stops at three small piers: one on the edge of Torvet, one near the castle entrance and one by the baroque gardens.

Sleeping

Accommodation is scarce in Hillerød and fills up quickly even out of high season – book ahead. For a list of accommodation options, head to www.visitnordsjaelland.com.

Hillerød Camping

CAMPING GROUND €

(☎48264854; www.hillerodcamping.dk; Blytækervej 18; camp site per adult 82kr; ☺mid-Apr–mid-Oct)

This wonderful two-star camping ground is about a 20-minute walk directly south of the castle along Slangerrupgade. You can really feel the love – free bike rental, bags of toys for children, a spotless kitchen, a cosy lounge with books and magazines, and even fresh flowers in the toilets.

Danhostel Hillerød

HOSTEL €

(☎48 26 19 86; www.hillerodhostel.dk; Lejrskolervej 4; dm/s/d 180/390/420kr; @☺) Although it's not very central – this lakeside hostel is 2.5km east of town – you can't complain about its facilities. The hostel is geared towards school groups: you'll find ping-pong, air hockey, badminton and pétanque, as well as bicycle (per hour/day 20/75kr) and canoe (per day 150kr) hire. Buses 301, 302 and 305 run from near the hostel to town.

Hotel Hillerød

HOSTEL €€

(☎48 24 08 00; www.hotelhillerod.dk; Milnervej 41; s 620-1135kr, d 800-1340kr; P@☺) Each bathroom at this strangely designed modern bungalow hotel juts out into a kind of covered atrium – odd. Rooms are pleasant and entirely unmemorable in that Ikea-type of way. Sixty-two have superior facilities – flat-screen TVs and handy little kitchenettes. Hotel Hillerød is about 2km south of the castle. Bikes can be borrowed free of charge.

Eating

Café Vivaldi

INTERNATIONAL €€

(Torvet 11; lunch 89-109kr, dinner mains 149-199kr; ☺lunch & dinner) Right in the centre of the sloping town square, this is the place to head on a sunny afternoon for people-watching. There's a good choice of light meals – nachos, wraps and salads, as well as more substantial offerings such as steaks.

Ristorante La Perla

ITALIAN €€

(www.laperla.dk; Torvet 1; 2/3 courses 169/189kr, pizzas 89-98kr; ☺lunch & dinner) La Perla's Sicilian chef serves up (mostly) genuine Italian food, and very tasty stuff it is. It's definitely more upmarket than your average pizzeria, yet the atmosphere is relaxed. In summer, you can dine in the cobblestone courtyard.

Thai 4 You

THAI €

(www.thai4you.dk; Østergade 22; mains 55-80kr; ☺lunch & dinner) East of Torvet, this authentic Thai restaurant has a long menu of favourites, including a tangy *tum yam* soup. If you want to test beers from local microbrewery Brøckshouse, there's a good selection here.

i Information

Hillerød Turistbureau (☎48 24 26 26; www.visitnordsjælland.com; Frederiksværksgade 2A; ☺10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat late Jun-early Aug, 10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri May & Sep) A short walk from the castle entrance.

i Getting There & Away

The S-train (E line) runs every 10 minutes between Copenhagen and Hillerød (108kr, 40 minutes).

Trains from Hillerød run eastward to Fredensborg (24kr, 10 minutes) and Helsingør (72kr, 30 minutes), north to Gilleleje (60kr, 30 minutes) and west to Tisvildeleje (60kr, 30 minutes); all services operate at least hourly.

Buses also link Hillerød with North Zealand towns but they are much slower than the train and cost just as much.

i Getting Around

Buses 301 and 302 depart frequently from the train station and can drop you near the castle gate (24kr).

Fredensborg

POP 8375

Small, quiet Fredensborg *is* its royal palace, plus the wonderful palace gardens that stretch alongside Denmark's second-largest lake, Esrum Sø. The palace is only open to the public in July, but it's worth a day out here anyway for peaceful greenery, swimming, boating and fishing opportunities.

👁 Sights

Fredensborg Slot

PALACE

(www.ses.dk; Slotsgade 1; ☺Jul by guided tour only) The royal family's summer residence, Fredensborg Palace was built in 1720 by

Frederik IV. Its name – 'Peace Palace' – commemorates the truce that Denmark had just achieved with its Scandinavian neighbours. The country-manoor appearance reflects the more tranquil mood of that era, an abrupt contrast with the moat-encircled fortresses of Kronborg and Frederiksborg that preceded it.

The main Italian baroque mansion, with marble floors and a large central cupola, is not as impressive as some other Danish royal palaces, partly because of its spread-out design. The building's very...*neat*, but the palace is really made by its gardens, a blending of baroque formality and a more luxuriant Romantic vision.

Fredensborg's interior can only be visited during July, when the royal family holidays elsewhere. Guided palace tours (adult/child 50/20kr) run every 15 minutes between 1pm and 4.30pm daily. Whenever the royal family is in residence, the building is flanked by smart Little-Tin-Soldier guards, with white-striped uniforms and bearskin hats. The **changing of the guard** is at noon daily.

The palace is about 1km from the train station, and well signposted.

Fredensborg Slotshave

GARDENS

The palace is surrounded by a huge area of garden and parkland (some parts with limited access). The **Palace Park**, open free to the public year-round, is a 120-hectare expanse of woodland, crossed by long riding avenues that radiate outwards from the palace. Wandering through tunnels of cool green leaves is particularly delightful on a hot summer's day. Its most unusual feature is **Normandsalen**, west of the palace, a circular amphitheatre containing 70 life-sized statues of Norwegian and Faroese folk characters. The original small wooden dolls of these fishermen, farmers, soldiers and servants were carved by an 18th-century Norwegian postman, Jørgen Christensen Garnaas, who sent them to King Frederik V. Frederik liked them so much he had them made from sandstone.

The royal family jealously shield the Reserved Gardens from public eyes, except in July when you can visit the **Orangery and Herb Garden** (adult/child 50/20kr, joint ticket to palace & orangery 75/30kr) by guided tour between 1pm and 4.20pm.

Esrum Sø

LAKE, OUTDOORS

About 1km west of the palace gate along Skipperallé, you'll come to the lovely Esrum Sø, Denmark's second-largest lake at 17 sq

km. A trail skirts around its shores, or you can explore the water by boat. You'll find a lakeside restaurant Skipperhuset (see following), as well as canoes and kayaks for hire. There's also a summer ferry service to Gribskov, a forested area with trails and picnic grounds on the western side of the lake.

Sleeping

Staff at the tourist office can book rooms in private homes, with doubles costing around 600kr including breakfast, plus a 25kr booking fee.

Danhostel Fredensborg HOSTEL €
(☎48 48 03 15; www.fredensborghostel.dk; Østrupvej 3; s 229-529kr, d 329-529kr; ☺Jan-mid-Dec; 📍🚰) The hostel occupies a prime location just 300m south of Fredensborg Slot. There are no dorms here – most of its 88 beds are in double rooms (all with washbasin or bathroom). There's a large secluded garden, and a bread-baking service.

Eating

Skipperhuset INTERNATIONAL €€
(www.skipperhuset.dk; Skipperallé 6; mains 88-168kr; ☺noon-5pm May-Oct) It's hard to imagine a more idyllic setting for alfresco dining than this restaurant on Esrum Sø. Fish is delicately prepared and topped with fresh seasonal vegetables, and there's usually a veggie option such as feta and spinach pancakes.

Ristorante Da Oscar ITALIAN €€
(www.daoscar.dk; Slotsgade 3A; pizzas 65-98kr, mains 185-220kr; ☺dinner Tue-Sun) Smart yet relaxed, Da Oscar serves decent Italian dishes in a garden setting. Tuck into pizza or pasta, or opt for interesting mains like veal with fennel-flavoured gorgonzola sauce, or grilled lamb with thyme, rosemary, sage, garlic and balsamic vinegar. As you may have gathered, vegetarians will struggle.

Café Under Kronen INTERNATIONAL €
(Jernbanegade 1; sandwiches 49-57kr) For quickie sandwiches, burgers, cake and ice cream, this round glass café is right outside the palace gates.

Information

Fredensborg Turistbureau (☎41 21 81 59; www.visitnordsjaelland.com; Dronning Ingrid Anlæg; ☺noon-4pm Mon-Fri Apr, 11am-4.30pm daily Jun-Aug, noon-4pm Sun-Fri May & Sep) Seasonal tourist bureau just outside the palace.

Getting There & Away

Fredensborg is midway between Hillerød (24kr, 10 minutes) and Helsingør (60kr, 20 minutes). Trains run about twice hourly from early morning.

NORTH COAST

Gorgeous white-sand beaches with shallow water and gentle waves line the northern Kattegat coast. Although the scattered small towns and villages only have a few thousand residents in winter, in summer the holiday homes fill and throngs of beachgoers create a salubrious sunshine-and-ice-cream atmosphere.

Hornbæk

POP 3500

'Denmark's St Tropez!', shout the tourist brochures. There are two similarities: Hornbæk's Blue-Flag beach, a vast expanse of soft white sand, is just as beautiful as any you'll find in southern France; and it certainly attracts more than its fair share of foxy young socialites.

Danish artists first discovered the attractions of this little-known fishing village in the 19th century, with early tourists following hot on their heels. Thanks to some geographical peculiarities, Hornbæk enjoys more sunshine than anywhere in Denmark.

Sights & Activities

Hornbæk Beach BEACH
Hornbæk's gorgeous Blue-Flag beach is the best on the north coast and the town's main attraction. The sand is white, the air is scented with salt and wild roses, there's plenty of space for sunbathing, and in high summer lifeguards keep an eye on the water. The beach stretches out to either side of the harbour – even though it borders the town, it's pleasantly undeveloped, with all the commercial facilities on the other side of the dunes. The eastern side is where the kitesurfers and windsurfers hang out: you'll need your own gear to join them.

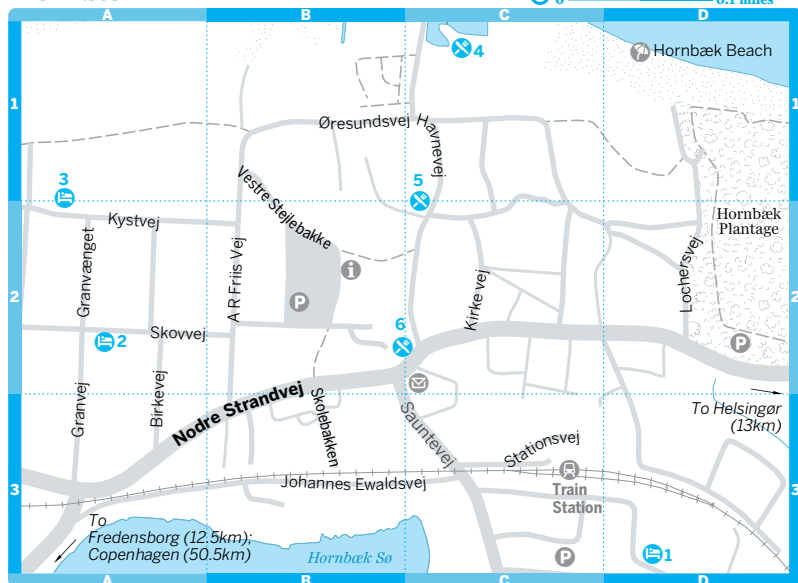
From the train station it's a five-minute walk – about 200m – directly north along Havnevej to the harbour. Climb the dunes to the left and you're on the beach.

Hornbæk Plantage WALKING
For an enjoyable nature stroll, Hornbæk Plantage, a public woodland that extends 3.5km along the coast east from Hornbæk, has

Hornbæk

0 200 m
0 0.1 miles

ZEALAND NORTH COAST



Hornbæk

Sleeping

- 1 Ewaldsgården Pension.....D3
 2 Hotel Hornbækhus.....A2
 3 Hotel Villa Strand.....A2

Eating

- 4 Fiskehuset Hornbæk.....C1
 5 Hansens Café.....C2
 6 Restaurant Oliva.....B2

numerous interconnecting trails branching out either side of Rte 237. One trail hugs the coast from Lochersvej in Hornbæk to the eastern end of the plantage. There are several areas along Nordre Strandvej (Rte 237) where you can park a car and start your wanderings. A free map *Vandreture i Statsskovene, Hornbæk Plantage* shows all the trails and is available from the tourist office.

Sleeping

The tourist office can book private single/double rooms from 300/500kr.



Ewaldsgården Pension GUESTHOUSE **CC**
 (☎49 70 00 82; www.ewaldsgaarden.dk, in Danish; Johannes Ewaldsvej 5; s/d/f incl breakfast

550/850/1170kr; ☺mid-Jun–mid-Aug; **P** **@** **☎**) This 17th-century farmhouse pension is a delight, with a picture-perfect garden and a cosy mix of antiques and cottage-style furnishings. All 12 rooms have washbasins; showers and toilets are off the hall. There's also a simple guest kitchen. Ewaldsgården is a five-minute walk southeast of the train station.

Hotel Villa Strand

HOTEL **CC**

(☎49 70 00 88; www.villastrand.dk; Kystvej 12; s 630-890kr, d 895-1420kr; ☺Jun-Aug; **P** **@** **☎**) If this hotel was any closer to the sea, it would be floating towards Sweden. Rooms in the main building are large, with cool white decor, floorboards and a lofty air. There are smaller, cheaper, but still tasteful rooms (singles/doubles 630/895kr) in the garden annexe. All have bathrooms and breakfast includes kosher products.

Hotel Hornbækhus

HOTEL **CC**

(☎49 70 01 69; www.hornbaekhus.com; Skovvej 7; s/d incl breakfast 1195/1395kr; **P** **@** **☎**) Down another green lane full of flowers and birds, this is the grandest hotel in Hornbæk, with the feel of a stately home. Rooms are elegant and classically furnished, and some have their own balconies. Cheaper rooms with

shared bathrooms cost 725/825kr per single/double.

Hornbæk Camping DCU

CAMPING GROUND, CABINS €

(☎49 70 02 23; www.camping-hornbaek.dk, in Danish; Planetvej 4; camp site per person 72kr; ☺year-round) Nestling up to the woods of Hornbæk Plantage, this three-star camping ground is about 1.5km southeast of the centre, off Sauntevej. It has good facilities – smart bathrooms, huts for hire, and a playground and ‘bouncy pillow’ for kids.



Eating

Hansens Café

DANISH €€

(Havnevej 19; smørrebrød 76-85kr, dinner mains 174-218kr; ☺lunch Sun, dinner Thu-Tue) Hansens is in the town's oldest house, an earthen-roofed half-timbered building with a pleasant pub-like atmosphere. The menu changes daily but you can expect to find solid Danish grub such as *fiskefrikadeller* (fishballs) with homemade remoulade.

Fiskehuset Hornbæk

SEAFOOD €

(Havnevej 32; fish & chips 50kr; ☺11am-8pm summer, reduced hrs rest of year) Hornbæk's humble harbourside gem is the Fiskehuset. Here you can dine like a lord, albeit outdoors with paper serviettes, on smoked cod's roe, cured herring, smoked mackerel, fresh prawns, *fiskefrikadeller*, mussel soup and all manner of wonderful, fresh, local seafood – for under 60kr.

Restaurant Oliva

DANISH, ITALIAN €€

(www.oliva.dk in Danish; Havnevej 1; lunch 69-245kr, dinner mains 225-245kr; ☺lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) This upmarket restaurant serves meticulously prepared Danish and Italian-inspired dishes. You can nibble on grilled focaccia in the leafy patio garden at lunchtime, or dine on substantial mains such as Jersey steak or duck with rhubarb in the evening.



Information

Danske Bank (Nordre Strandvej 350) In the town centre.

Hornbæk Turistbureau (☎49 70 47 47; www.hornbaek.dk; Vestre Stejlebakke 2A; ☺1-5pm Mon & Thu, 10am-3pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Inside the library. To reach it take the walkway at the side of Danske Bank. The library offers free internet access.

Post office (Sauntevej 1; ☺noon-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Inside the Super Brugsen supermarket.

Getting There & Around

Trains connect Hornbæk with Helsingør (38kr, 25 minutes) and Gilleleje (38kr, 15 minutes) about twice hourly.

Hornbæk Cykeludlejning (☎20 78 03 43; Nordre Strandvej 315D; ☺9am-noon & 3-4pm Mon-Wed, to 5pm Thu, 10am-noon Sat & Sun) Rent bicycles for 75kr per day.

Gilleleje

POP 6490

Gilleleje, Zealand's northernmost town, has been a fishing village since the 14th century and retains a certain timeless character. During WWII, its fishing boats were used to smuggle thousands of Jews to neutral Sweden, but don't expect any such excitement today. Low-key charms include several beaches, an early morning harbourside auction, bustling fish restaurants, and a coastal walk to a small monument dedicated to Kierkegaard. Between Hornbæk and Gilleleje is Tegners Museum and Statuepark, devoted to one of Denmark's leading sculptors.



Sights & Activities

Beaches

BEACH

Although they aren't as long and golden as those at Hornbæk or Tisvildeleje, beaches surround the town. The one on the western side, a stretch of sand and stone, meets Blue-Flag standards and has lifeguards in summer.

Tegners Museum & Statuepark

MUSEUM, MONUMENTS

(www.rudolphtegner.dk; Museumsvej 19, Villingerød; adult/under 12yr 50kr/free; ☺9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, noon-5pm Tue-Sun mid-Apr-May & Sep-mid-Oct) One of the first Danish sculptors to discover concrete, Rudolph Tegner (1873-1950) used the wild heathland midway between Gilleleje and Hornbæk as a backdrop for his monumental sculptures, made of plaster, clay, bronze and marble. This museum now displays more than 250 of Tegner's pieces, while the surrounding grounds showcase 14 of his monumental bronze sculptures. The museum also functions as a mausoleum – Tegner is buried in a chamber in the heart of the building. From Gilleleje, bus 362 runs past the museum.

Fyrhistorik Museum på Nakkehoved

MUSEUM

(Fyrvejen 20; adult/child incl entry to the Gilleleje Museum 60kr/free; ☺11am-4pm Tue-Sun mid-Jun-mid-Sep, reduced hrs rest of year) The eastern

lighthouse is now the Fyrhistorik Museum på Nakkehoved, which traces the history of Danish lighthouses from the 16th century. You can get to the lighthouse on the coastal footpath or by turning north off Rte 237 onto Fyrvejen.

Gilleleje Museum

MUSEUM

(Vesterbrogade 56; adult/under 18yr incl entry to Fyrhistorik Museum på Nakkehoved 35kr/free; ☺1-4pm Wed-Mon Jun-Aug, 1-4pm Wed-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat Sep-May) This museum on the western side of town runs through Gilleleje's history from the Middle Ages to the advent of summer tourism. It includes a 19th-century fisherman's house.

Walking Trails

WALKING

Of the two **coastal trails**, the one to the west, which starts near the intersection of Nordre Strandvej and Vesterbrogade, leads 1.75km to a stone **memorial** dedicated to the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who used to make visits to this coast.

The trail to the east begins just off Hovedgade and leads 2.5km to the site where two lighthouses with coal-burning beacons were erected in 1772.

Havtur

BOAT TOURS, FISHING

(☎28 95 39 58; www.havtur.dk in Danish & German) It operates a number of boat tours, including a return trip to Kronborg Slot (300kr), a sunset tour (125kr) and four-hour fishing expeditions (250kr). Contact Havtur directly for up-to-date sailing times and prices.

Sleeping

There are no hostels or camping grounds in Gilleleje, but tourist office staff can book rooms in private homes for around 450/800kr for singles/doubles, plus a 35kr booking fee.

Gilleleje Badehotel

HOTEL €€

(☎48 30 13 47; www.gillelejebadehotel.dk; Hulsøvej 15; r incl breakfast 890-1390kr; ♿) Kierkegaard was a frequent guest at this luxurious beach hotel. The atmosphere is so richly nostalgic you half expect the hotel to be sepia-tinted, but instead a soothing egg-white colour scheme prevails. All the rooms are bright and sunlit and most have balconies with views of Sweden. Use of the sauna and steam is complimentary, though use of the Jacuzzi is a brow-raising 275kr. The hotel is 1km west of town.

Eating

Adamsen's Fisk

SEAFOOD €

(Gilleleje Havn; plaice & chips 65kr; ☺11am-9pm, sushi bar 11am-8pm) This popular harbourside takeaway peddles fish, seafood and sides of chips and more salubrious salads. The fish and seafood are heavily battered, so delicate stomachs and waist-watchers may prefer the grilled options. After selecting your combo, you're given a token which flashes when your order is ready. For those who prefer their fish raw, Adamsen's has a sushi bar next door (10-piece sushi set 125kr).

Restaurant Brassieriet

SEAFOOD €€

(Nordre Havnevej 3; smørrebrød 55-108kr, dinner mains 158-268kr; ☺lunch & dinner) By the harbour, Brassieriet offers open sandwiches of whitebait, herring, plaice, eel, salmon, shrimps and meatballs at lunchtime. The evening menu also has a good choice of fish dishes, including seafood pasta and sautéed plaice, plus meaty mains such as rib-eye steak and veal. Vegetarians may struggle.

Gilleleje Havn

FRENCH-DANISH €€

(Havnevej 14; lunch mains 88-168kr, dinner mains 119-258kr; ☺lunch & dinner) Gilleleje Havn is an excellent modern option, with an open kitchen and innovative menu of French/Danish seafood, with the odd piece of chicken/steak among the fish dishes. There are good views over the harbour.

Rogeriet Bornholm

SMOKEHOUSE €

(Gilleleje Havn; fish 35kr; ☺9am-4pm) Close to Adamsen's, this simple smokehouse sells inexpensive smoked fish by the piece.

Information

Tourist office (☎48 30 01 74; www.visitnordsjælland.dk; Hovedgade 6F; ☺10am-6pm Mon-Sat mid-Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri Sep-mid-Jun) In the town centre, 200m east of the train station.

Getting There & Around

Trains run between Hillerød and Gilleleje (60kr, 30 minutes), and between Helsingør and Gilleleje (72kr, 45 minutes), about twice hourly on weekdays, hourly at weekends.

Tisvildeleje

Tisvildeleje is essentially a glorious sweep of golden-sand beach with a small seaside village attached. The beach is backed by hills and forests, threaded through with

nature trails. You could easily spend several relaxing days here, sunbathing, swimming, strolling through the woods, and generally taking things very, very easy.

Sights & Activities

Beach

BEACH

The Blue-Flag beach, a kilometre-long stretch of pure white sand at the foot of the village, is why people come to Tisvildeleje. A shallow-sloping shore and lifeguards at the height of summer make it a favourite with families. There are changing rooms, toilets and an ice-cream kiosk at the edge of the large parking area. Other beaches are accessible a short walk away from town.

Forest Trails

WALKING

From the car park, you can walk along the beach or on a dirt path through the woods, about 3km south to **Troldeskoven** (Witch Wood), an area of ancient trees that have been sculpted into haunting shapes by the wind.

Inland from the beach is **Tisvilde Hegn**, a windswept forest of twisted trees and heather-covered hills that extends southwest for more than 8km. Much of this enchanting forest was planted in the 18th century to stabilise sand drifts engulfing the area. Tisvilde Hegn has numerous trails, including one to **Asserbo Slotsruin**, the moat-encircled ruins of a 12th-century manor house and monastery, near the southern boundary of the forest. Trail maps are available free from the tourist office.

Sleeping & Eating



Helenekilde Badehotel

HOTEL €€€

(☎48 70 70 01; www.helenekilde.com; Strandvej 25; d facing inland 1295kr, d with sea view 1595-2095kr;  ) Like Tisvildeleje Strand, the interior of this enchanting beachfront hotel was designed by the ballet dancer Alexander Kolpin, who also co-owns both properties. The string of stylish, cosy communal areas feature beautiful furnishings, art and the odd vintage suitcase-turned-coffee table. Rooms are simple yet elegant, with 16 of them looking out over the waves. Dreamy sea views are also on tap at its casually elegant **restaurant** (mains 185-225kr;  lunch & dinner mid-Jun–mid-Aug), which serves up honest, rustic Danish fare to the sound of crashing waves. The hotel is a five-minute walk along a leafy lane (signposted from the station).

Tisvildeleje Strand Hotel

HOTEL €€€

(☎48 70 71 19; www.strandhotel.dk; Hovedgaden 75; r 850-1450kr;  late Jun–mid-Aug;  ) This one-time party hotel has reinvented itself as a more refined slumber spot, its neutral tones, art books and weathered antiques giving the place a chic ‘Hamptons’ vibe. Rooms are a soothing combo of coconut rug carpets, woollen throws and contemporary charcoal-hued bathrooms. The three rooms with shared bathroom are cheaper (850kr). The hotel **restaurant** (tapas 125kr, dinner buffet adult/child 295/150kr;  lunch & dinner late Aug–mid-Aug) is well-known for its dinner ‘grill’ buffet, which includes succulent meats, dips, a variety of salads, and fresh seasonal fruit. Best of all, the hotel is within easy walking distance.



Danhostel

Tisvildeleje


HOSTEL, CAMPING GROUND €

(☎48 70 98 50; www.helene.dk; Bygmarken 30; camping per person 50kr, dm/s/d 150/470/490kr;  year-round;  ) One kilometre east of town, this modern hostel and camping ground shares the excellent facilities of the Sankt Helene holiday complex. The grounds cover 12 hectares and have walking trails, sports fields, playgrounds, farm animals, kids’ activities and a nice restaurant, and are within walking distance of a sandy beach. The complex is accessible to people in wheelchairs. By train, get off at Godhavns station, one stop before Tisvildeleje: the hostel is a short walk north.

Bed & Breakfast

Hårlandsgård

GUESTHOUSE €

(☎48 70 83 96; www.haarlandsgaard.dk, in Danish; Harlands Allé 12; s 400kr, d 490-600kr; ) This 18th-century farmhouse, about 1km from town near Godhavns station, has a sunny garden, comfy rooms, and an art gallery in the former stables. Breakfast is an extra 60kr. It’s the house on the right-hand side of the first sharp turn of Harlands Allé.

Tisvildeleje Cafeen

INTERNATIONAL €€

(Hovedgaden 55; lunch mains 110-125kr, dinner mains 165-225kr;  lunch & dinner daily summer, Fri-Sun only rest of year) A popular spot, complete with alfresco summertime seating, this cafe dishes up a worldly menu spanning smørbrød, burgers and salads, to gazpacho and *moules marinières* (mariners’ mussels). It’s one of the venues for the annual Tisvildeleje folk festival, and features live music and DJs on Friday and Saturday nights in summer.

Tisvildeleje has a good **bakery** (Hovedgaden 60; ☎7am-6pm), and there's a grocery shop further up the street. A couple of kiosks, one in town and one at the beach car park, sell burgers, hot dogs, pizzas and ice cream.

i Information

Tourist office (☎48 70 71 06; www.visitnord.sjaelland.dk; Banevej 8; ☎noon-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat mid-Jun-Aug) Seasonal office based in Tisvildeleje train station.

i Getting There & Around

Getting round the coast from Gilleleje to Tisvildeleje by public transport isn't as simple as it might be. From Gilleleje, catch bus 360R to Helsingør, then the train to Tisvildeleje (36kr, 55 minutes Monday to Saturday, 80 minutes Sunday). Services run half-hourly to hourly on weekdays, and hourly on weekends. Trains also run between Tisvildeleje and Hillerød (60kr, 30 minutes) every 30 to 60 minutes.

FJORD TOWNS

Roskilde Fjord slices its way over 30km inland. Several towns lie scattered around its shores, the best of which is undoubtedly Roskilde itself, an unmissable tourist spot with its fascinating Unesco-blessed cathedral, Viking artefacts and huge rock festival.

Roskilde

POP 47,115

In July, fans pour into town for the four-day Roskilde Festival, which vies with Glastonbury for the title of Europe's biggest rock festival. Anyone who's anyone on the international scene has played here – past crowds have grunged out to Nirvana, head-banged before Metallica and danced like idiots to the Arctic Monkeys.

If you're not a festival fan, pity the poor fools for their warm beer and toilet queues, and relish the town instead. Roskilde is justly famous for its superb Viking Ship Museum and striking cathedral, the burial site of Danish royalty.

The town itself came to prominence in the Viking Age, when it was the capital of Denmark. Harald Bluetooth built Zealand's first wooden-stave Christian church here in AD 980. It was replaced by a stone building in 1026 on the instructions of a woman named Estrid, whose husband was assassinated in the stave church after a heated chess match

(only in Scandinavia!). The foundations of the 11th-century stone church are beneath the floor of the present-day cathedral.

Medieval Roskilde was a thriving trade centre and the powerhouse of Danish Catholicism, big enough to support the country's grandest cathedral. The town began its decline when the capital moved to Copenhagen in the early 15th century, and its population shrank radically after the Reformation in 1536.

These days, Roskilde is a popular day trip from Copenhagen, a mere 30km away.

i Sights

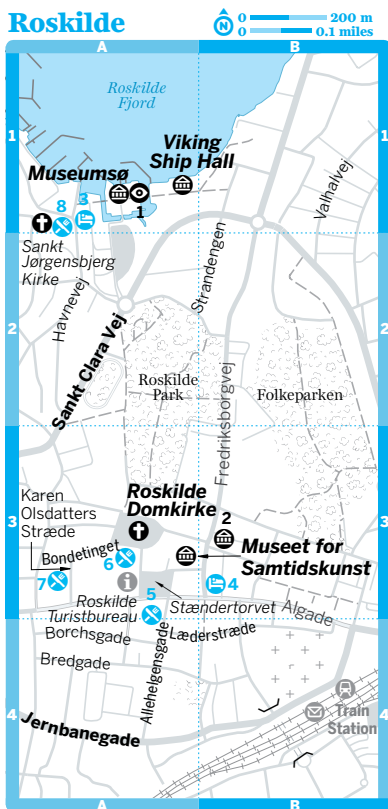
TOP CHOICE **Viking Ship Museum** MUSEUM
(www.vikingshipmuseum.com; Vindeboder 12; adult/under 18yr 100kr/free; ☎10am-5pm late Jun-Aug, to 4pm rest of year) People with an interest in the Vikings will be wowed by the superb Viking Ship Museum, which displays five Viking ships discovered at the bottom of Roskilde Fjord. The museum is made up of two main sections – the Viking Ship Hall, where the boats themselves are kept; and Museumsmø, where archaeological work takes place. There are free 45-minute guided tours in English daily at noon and 3pm from late June to the end of August; and at noon on weekends in May and early to late June.

Viking Ship Hall

Roskilde's Viking-era inhabitants were expecting trouble in the mid-11th century. Five clinker-built ships, all made between 1030 and 1042, were deliberately scuttled in a narrow channel 20km north of Roskilde, presumably to block an attacking army. Once they had been holed and sunk, a mass of stones was piled on top to create an underwater barrier.

In 1962, a coffer dam was built around the barrier and sea water was pumped out. Within four months, archaeologists were able to remove the mound of stones and excavate the ships, whose wooden hulks were in thousands of pieces. These ship fragments were painstakingly reassembled onto skeleton frames in the purpose-built Viking Ship Hall. This brutal-looking minimalist construction becomes something magical inside, where the ghostly boats seem to float once more on the waters of the fjord.

The ships, known as Skuldelev 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, show off the range of the Viking shipwrights: there's an ocean-going trading



Roskilde

📍 Top Sights

Museet for Samtidskunst	A3
Museumso	A1
Roskilde Domkirke	A3
Viking Ship Hall	A1

📍 Sights

1 Boat Trips	A1
2 Roskilde Museum	B3

🏠 Sleeping

3 Danhostel Roskilde	A1
4 Hotel Prindsen	B3

🍴 Eating

5 Café Vivaldi	A3
6 Raadhush-Kælderen	A3
7 Restaurant Mumm	A3
8 Store Børs	A1

vessel, a 30m warship for international raiding, a coastal trader, a 17m warship probably used around the Baltic, and a fishing boat. Carbon dating and dendrochronology have discovered further secrets, including their builders' geographical scope – Skuldelev 1, for example, was made in Norway, whereas Skuldelev 2 came from Dublin.

Interesting displays about the Viking Age put the boats into a historical context, and the basement cinema runs a 14-minute film (in Danish, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish) about the 1962 excavation. There's also a fascinating exhibition and film documenting the nail-biting 2007-08 voyage of the *Hawkingsten fra Glendalough* from Roskilde to Dublin and back. Based on the 60-oared warship Skuldelev 2, it's the largest Viking ship reconstruction to date (an incredible 340 trees went into its creation).

Museumso

On Museum Island, adjacent to the Viking Ship Hall, craftspeople use Viking-era techniques and tools to build replicas of Viking ships. *Ottar*, *Hawkingsten fra Glendalough*, *Roar Ege*, *Helge Ask* and *Kraka Fyr* (reconstructions of Skuldelev 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 respectively) are moored in the **harbour**, where you can really appreciate their light, flexible designs.

In summer, a shipwright, blacksmith, tar-burner, weaver, rope-maker and fletcher demonstrate their crafts. Children can join in the fun by striking coins and painting their own shields.

Museumso also has an **archaeological workshop** (☎10am-5pm), where you can watch researchers from the National Museum analysing recent excavations.

Boat Trips

If you've always had an urge to leap aboard a longboat for a spot of light pillaging, join one of the museum's hour-long boat trips. **Traditional Nordic boats** are propelled across the water by *you* and the rest of your shipmates.

From late June to mid-August, 50-minute trips run daily at noon and 2pm, with extra trips most days at 11am, 3pm and 4pm. Reduced daily sailings also take place from May to late June and from mid-August to the end of September, weather dependent. Call ahead on ☎46 30 02 00 to confirm sailing times. Tickets (80kr) are additional to the main museum entry ticket.

ROSKILDE ROCKS

Denmark's answer to Glastonbury and northern Europe's music festival heavyweight, **Roskilde Festival** (www.roskilde-festival.dk) is a four-day binge of bands and booze that rocks Roskilde every summer on the last weekend in June.

Since 1971, it has attracted the biggest and best international performers – some 170-plus rock, techno and world-music bands play on seven stages. The line-up in 2011 included Arctic Monkeys, Iron Maiden, Kings of Leon, PJ Harvey, Portishead and The Strokes... you get the picture! The promoters are astute at trend-spotting, so expect to see hot new bands who haven't yet come into the spotlight.

While the music is the main protagonist, there are plenty of other diversions, including a cinema, swimming lake and skatepark, plus yoga, dance workshops, art events and a naked run! Many people camp from the Sunday before the festival starts, spending four days 'warming up' for the festival proper. Stalls sell everything from tattoos to fast food but you may want to bring some food supplies as prices are high.

Tickets cost around 1830kr and can be purchased on the official festival website, which has a link to **Billetlugen** (www.billetlugen.dk). If lugging your own tent along seems bothersome, more expensive tickets (from 2390kr) are available that include a pre-pitched tent. There's a drunken-moron tradition of setting fire to tents at the end of the festival – beware.

Advance sales usually start in early December, but discounted 'early bird' tickets are sometimes available on the website months earlier. All 75,000-plus tickets are usually sold by June, so it pays to bag yours early.

Roskilde Domkirke

CATHEDRAL

(www.roskildedomkirke.dk; Domkirkepladsen; adult/10-18yr/under 10yr 60/20kr/free; ☎9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-5pm Sun Apr-Sep, reduced hrs rest of year) Denmark's most amazing cathedral is Roskilde Domkirke, a designated Unesco World Heritage Site. It dates back to the 12th century, but has been added to so many times that it's now a superb showcase of 800 years' worth of Danish architecture. As the royal mausoleum, it contains the crypts of 37 Danish kings and queens – contemplating the remains of so many powerful historical figures is a moving memento mori. No fewer than 11 spectacular chapels and crypts sprout from the main body of the cathedral. No doubt every visitor will have their favourite: here are ours.

The **chapel of King Christian IV**, off the northern side of the cathedral, contains the builder king himself. His ocean-green coffin, surrounded by processing angels, is quite low-key for such an extravagant monarch. Most of the decoration in the chapel – vast, overly dramatic paintings of Christian's life surrounded by trompe l'oeil details – is actually from the 19th century, as the original sepulchre burned down a year before Christian's death. The only contemporary features are the chapel gates, so ornate they were said to have been created by the devil

himself (although really the work of Christian's favourite metalsmith Caspar Fincke).

There are some fantastic 15th-century frescoes (the largest in Denmark) in the **chapel of the Magi**. It also contains the Renaissance sepulchres of Christian III and Frederik II, the most ornate in the cathedral. They look like antique temples, guarded by halberd-bearing soldiers. Another interesting feature of the chapel is the Royal Column, which shows the heights of visiting princes – from Christian I at a lofty 219.5cm down to titchy Christian VII at 164.1cm.

The neoclassical **chapel of Frederik V** whispers 'death' like no other part of the cathedral. You'll find 12 members of the royal family here, all interred in white alabaster sepulchres, surrounded by skulls, angels and weeping women.

The **nave** contains Christian IV's private box, and an intricate 17th-century pulpit (1610) made of marble, alabaster and sandstone by Copenhagen sculptor Hans Brokman. A killjoy dean disconnected the mechanism of the wonderful **clock** in the 18th century, annoyed that his parishioners paid more attention to it than to him, but today's church-people have relented. St George slays the dragon on the hour; the poor beast lets out a pitiful wheeze; and two ballad characters ting the bells.

Margrethe I's elegant sarcophagus and the shining golden altarpiece in the **choir** usually attract crowds of admirers. We prefer the wonderfully lively 15th-century choir-stall carvings: highlights from the New Testament line the northern side, and fearsome Old Testament tales adorn the south – Joseph being stuffed down a hole, Judith chopping off Holofernes' head, and Noah's family crammed into the ark...

Free concerts on the 16th-century baroque pipe organ are usually held at 8pm on Thursday in June, July and August. It's not unusual for the cathedral to be closed on Saturday for weddings, particularly in spring.

Museet for Samtidskunst MUSEUM
(Museum of Contemporary Art; www.samtidskunst.dk; Stændertorvet 3D; adult/student & under 18yr 40kr/free; ☀11am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-4pm Sat & Sun) Housed in the elegant 18th-century Roskilde Palace (built to be used by Christian VI whenever he was in town) is this surprisingly cutting-edge contemporary art space. Exhibitions lean towards new media, with often perplexing sound, video or performance installations by both Danish and international artists.

Roskilde Museum MUSEUM
(www.roskildemuseum.dk; Sankt Olsgade 18; adult/child 25kr/free; ☀11am-4pm) The well-presented Roskilde Museum covers Roskilde's history from the Stone Age through Harald Bluetooth's legacy to the contemporary 'rock age' of the Roskilde Festival. The exhibits have been arranged by two Danish artists, meaning that you get aesthetic pleasure along with an education.



Activities

You can hire kayaks for 175/300kr per two hours/day from **Himmel & Hav** (☎30 95 10 00; www.himmel-hav.dk, in Danish; Baunehøjvej 7; ☀10am-sunset Apr-Sep), next door to Roskilde Camping.



Sleeping

Roskilde has limited accommodation for its size; being so close to Copenhagen, it's a popular day-trip destination. The tourist office books rooms in private homes for 450kr for doubles only, plus a 45kr booking fee.

Hotel Prindsen HOTEL €€
(☎46 30 91 00; www.prindsen.dk; Algade 13; s/d 1435/1535kr; P@☎) First opened in 1695,

the centrally located Prindsen is Denmark's oldest hotel. It has a guest list that reads like a who's who of great Danes, from King Frederik VII to Hans Christian Andersen. The classically styled rooms are different sizes, but all have modern amenities and include breakfast. Deluxe rooms have sunken Jacuzzis and there's an in-house restaurant to boot. Rates drop on weekends and public holidays (singles/doubles 895/995kr).

Roskilde Camping CAMPING GROUND, CABINS €
(☎46 75 79 96; www.roskildecamping.dk; Baunehøjvej 7, Veddelev; camp site per person 80kr; ☀Apr-Sep) Beautifully situated on the edge of Roskilde Fjord, 4km north of the Viking Ship Museum, this three-star camping ground is family-friendly with good facilities. There's a sandy Blue-Flag beach on the doorstep, and you can hire kayaks from Himmel & Hav next door. It's a 20-minute bus ride (24kr) by bus 603 from town.

Danhostel Roskilde HOTEL €
(☎46 35 21 84; www.danhostel.dk/roskilde in Danish; Vindeboder 7; dm 180-250kr, s 425-525kr, d 450-650kr; ☀year-round; P@☎) This modern hostel is right next door to the Viking Ship Museum. Each of the 40 large rooms has its own shower and toilet. Staff are friendly, although the mattress we slept on was frustratingly lop-sided. Wi-fi is an extra 20kr per hour (100kr per 24 hours).

Svogerslev Kro Hotel HOTEL €€
(☎46 38 30 05; www.svogerslevkro.dk; Svogerslev Hovedgade 45; s/d 725/950kr; P@☎) In a romantic red half-timbered building, this thatched inn is 4km west of town. Despite looking a little dowdy, the simply decorated rooms are homely and look onto the garden. There's a Danish/French restaurant, open daily for lunch and dinner. From Roskilde, it's a 20-minute ride on bus 602 (24kr).



Eating

Restaurant Mumm DANISH, INTERNATIONAL €€
(☎46 37 22 01; www.restaurantmumm.dk; Karen Olsdatters Stræde 9; 3/5/7 courses 435/535/635kr; ☀dinner Mon-Sat) One of Roskilde's more exclusive dining destinations, Mumm takes Danish, French and Spanish influences and gives them a seriously creative twist. The result is nothing short of inspired, with dishes like fried catfish with pumpkin and liquorice, or silky cheesecake with blue cornflour and plums. Book ahead.

Store BørsDANISH, INTERNATIONAL **cc**

(☎46 32 50 45; www.store-bors.dk, in Danish; Havnevej 43; lunch 85-158kr, dinner mains 218-278kr, 7-course tasting menu 495kr; ☺lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Located down by the harbour, this melon-coloured cottage cooks up some of the town's finest food. The chefs smoke their own fish, use herbs from the restaurant garden, and create soulful evening gems such as fried mackerel with smoked potatoes, tarragon cream and sprouts. The lunch options offer simpler fare, including herring and cheese plates, carpaccio and beef tartar.

Raadhus-KælderenINTERNATIONAL **cc**

(www.raadhuskaelderen.dk; Stændertorvet; smørrebrød 42-108kr, dinner mains 168-328kr; ☺lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; ☎) Another reliable nosh spot is this atmospheric restaurant in the cellar of the old town hall (c 1430). Herring platters, salads, burgers and open sandwiches (including a gorgonzola and raw egg yolk number) feature on the lunch menu. The dinner menu is more ambitious, with dishes such as tomato soup with baked French goat cheese and a robust selection of grilled meats. Vegetarians may struggle, though.

Café VivaldiINTERNATIONAL **cc**

(Stændertorvet; salads 99kr, dinner mains 149-199kr; ☺lunch & dinner) Slap bang on the main square (cathedral views included), this modern faux-bistro is a good place to sit back and people-watch over abundant servings of tasty cafe grub. Edibles include soup, sandwiches, wraps, burgers and salads, as well as more substantial pasta and meat dishes. It's particularly handy on Sundays, when most of the town shuts down.

i Information

Library (www.roskildebib.dk; Dronning Margrethes Vej 14; ☺10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat year-round, also noon-4pm Sun mid-Sep-mid-Apr) Free internet access.

Nordea (Algade 4) One of several banks in the centre.

Post office (Jernbanegade 3; ☺10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Next door to the train station.

Roskilde Turistbureau (☎46 31 65 65; www.visitroskilde.com; Stændertorvet 1; ☺10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat Jul & Aug, reduced hrs rest of year) The tourist office provides information, as well as an accommodation booking service.

i Getting There & Around

CAR If you're coming from Copenhagen by car, Rte 21 leads to Roskilde. Upon approaching the city, exit onto Rte 156, which leads into the centre. There is a large car park down by the Viking Ship Museum.

TRAIN Trains between Copenhagen and Roskilde are frequent (96kr, 25 minutes). Trains also run to Køge (48kr, 25 minutes) and Næstved (58kr, 42 minutes).

Lejre

The superb experimental archaeology centre outside Lejre (a tiny village about 8km southwest of Roskilde) is like nothing we've ever seen. Combine a visit to it with a trip to the palace, Ledreborg Slot, for a full day's outing.

👁 Sights**Sagnlandet Lejre**

HISTORIC RE-CREATION

(www.sagnlandet.dk; Slangealleen 2; adult/3-11yr 125/85kr; ☺10am-5pm late Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Aug-mid-Sep, reduced hrs rest of year) The experimental archaeology centre 'Land of Legends' is an absolutely fascinating place. Here, enthusiastic re-enactors use ancient technology to test out various theories: How many people does it take to build a dolmen? What plants might have been used to dye clothing? And how do you stop the goats eating your reed roof?

The landscape at Lejre is just beautiful, with rolling hills and lake-filled hollows. A 3km-long path takes you past a Viking Age marketplace, prehistoric burial mounds, a dancing labyrinth, the Iron Age village 'Lethra', through fields of ancient crops, down to a sacrificial pool and over precarious staked-wood bridges.

Kids can let loose in the hands-on Fire Valley, paddling dug-out canoes, attempting to work a fire drill, baking biscuits and (ooh, it's hard not to wince) chopping up logs using primitive axes. Roaming aurochs and squelching, munching wild boar add to the fun.

Prices might look steep, but if you take a picnic and possibly some kids who don't mind losing a toe or two, you could easily spend most of the day here.

From Lejre the train station, bus 233 will get you there.

DRAGSHOLM SLOT

Fancy a night in a culinary castle? Then pack your bag and your appetite and check in at **Dragsholm Slot** (☎59 65 33 00; www.dragsholm-slot.dk; Dragsholm Allé, Hørve; s/d from 1795/1995kr; 📍). Located at the edge of Zealand's fertile Lammefjorden (Denmark's most famous 'vegetable garden'), its medieval walls are home to **Slotskøkkenet** (The Castle Kitchen; 5/7 courses 650/800kr; 🍴dinner Tue-Sat late Jun-late Aug, Wed-Sat rest of Jun, reduced hrs rest of year), a New Nordic hot spot headed by ex-Noma chef Claus Henriksen.

'Locally sourced' is the catch-cry, from the area's prized carrots to herbs from the castle's own garden. The end result is deceptively simple, with sublime creations such as salads from the kitchen garden with oyster cream and juice of roasted peas. Upstairs, the more casual **Spisehuset** (2-/3-course lunch 195/245kr, 3-course dinner 345kr) offers cheaper, pared-back Nordic dishes using the same top-notch ingredients (think herb-marinated herring or hay-smoked salmon). Bookings are a must for Slotskøkkenet and recommended for Spisehuset.

Nosh aside, whitewashed Dragsholm is famed for its 800-year history, which includes the imprisonment of Roskilde's last Catholic bishop and the secret burial of a love-struck girl in the castle walls (eerily visible behind a plexiglass panel). While some rooms – spread across the castle and the nearby porter's lodge – feature contemporary styling, most ooze a distinguished baronial air, with anything from canopy beds to fleur-de-lis wallpaper and (in some cases) Jacuzzis. Add to this a string of Late Romantic salons and ballrooms and rambling fairy-tale gardens, and you'll soon be feeling like a well-fed noble. Check the website for dinner and accommodation packages (often cheaper than the official room rates), and request a room with field or garden views.

Dragsholm Slot is 91km west of Copenhagen via motorway 21. Getting here by public transport is very difficult.

Ledreborg Slot

PALACE, GARDENS

(☎46 48 00 38; www.ledreborgslot.dk; Ledreborg Allé 2D; admission gardens 25kr, palace guided tour 2075kr, max 20 people; 🕒gardens 11am-4pm year-round, palace by guided tour only May-Sep) The grand manor house Ledreborg Slot is one of Denmark's finest rococo palaces. The stately home was built and decorated by Count Johan Ludvig Holstein in 1739: the count's descendants still live here, and the house's interior has barely changed in all that time. It's chock-full of curlicued furniture, gilded mirrors, chandeliers, oil paintings and wall tapestries. One of the most impressive rooms is the banquet room. You can also visit the family chapel, kitchens and – a house isn't a home without one – dungeon.

Outside are 80 hectares of gardens, recently restored to their full baroque glory; and in the woods you'll find the **Jungle Path**, a series of suspended walkways, ropes, ladders and installations. It's designed for children but is equally fun for adults.

📍 Getting There & Away

From Roskilde it's just a short train ride to Lejre station, where bus 233 continues to both Ledreborg Slot and Sagnlandet Lejre (24kr).

By car, from Roskilde take Ringstedvej (Rte 14), turn right on Rte 156 and then almost immediately turn left onto Ledreborg Allé. Follow the signs to Ledreborg, 6km away, where a long drive lined by old elm trees leads to the entrance. Sagnlandet Lejre is 2km further west along the same road.

SOUTHERN ZEALAND

While northern Zealand lays claim to most of the island's must-see sites, the island's south is not without its drawcards. You'll find Denmark's best preserved ring fortress at Trelleborg and its oldest half-timbered house in Køge. The region is also home to one of Denmark's most shamelessly charming enchanting hamlets, Vallø, as well as the soothing Suså River, a picture-perfect, kayak-friendly escape route.

Køge

POP 35,105

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

Sights

Køge Museum

MUSEUM

(www.koegemuseum.dk, in Danish; Nørregade 4; adult/child 30kr/free; ☉11am-5pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, 1-5pm Tue-Fri & Sun, 11am-3pm Sat Sep-May) Once a merchant's home, Køge Museum occupies a lovely half-timbered building dating from 1619.

As well as the expected furnishings, local-history artefacts and a large textile

collection, there are two significant exhibits. One is the **Strøby Egede** grave from 4000 BC, containing the skeletons of eight children and adults – the only mass grave from that era to be found in Europe. The other is Denmark's biggest **coin-hoard**, a shining pile of 17th-century silver unearthed in the courtyard at Brogade 17 by two electricians. The 32kg pile is thought to have been stashed away during the Danish-Swedish wars.

In Hans Christian Andersen's day, a local inn was supposed to have had the words 'God, Oh God in Kjøge' scratched onto a windowpane. Failing to find the inscription, Andersen vandalised a window himself – writing smugly in his diary 'I wrote it, and now it is very legible'. The museum has the glass on show.

KØS

MUSEUM

(www.koes.dk; Nørregade 29; adult/18-24yr/under 18yr incl entry to the Køge Museum 50/20kr/free; ☉10am-5pm Tue-Sun) Køge's Museum of Art in Public Spaces, Køge Skitsesamling is a unique entity, displaying not the artists' finished work, but the notes and scribbles, sketches, models and mock-ups that built

RINGSTED'S ROYAL CHURCH

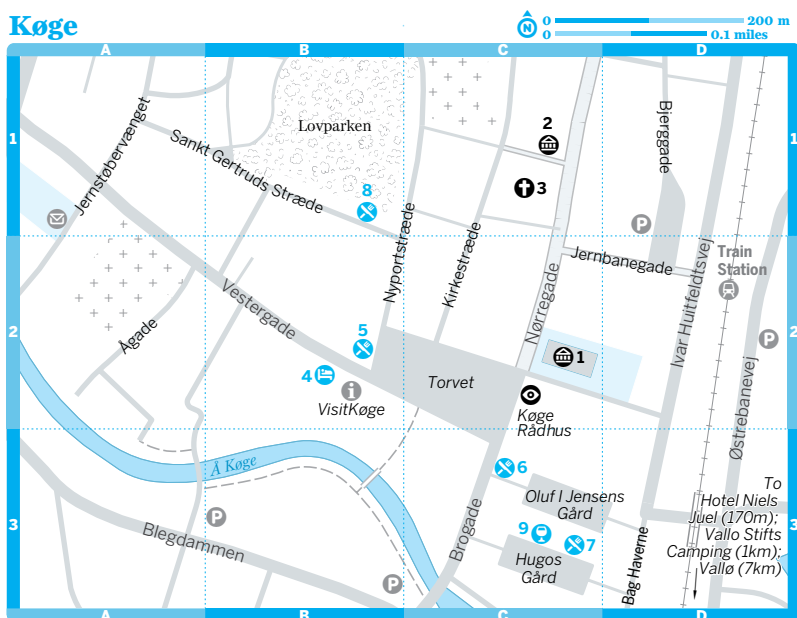
Ringsted is mostly a modern town, with a bustling shopping centre but little in the way of tourist attractions. However, if you're passing through, it's worth stopping at the imposing **Sankt Bendts Kirke** (Sankt Bendtsgade 1; admission free; ☉10am-5pm May-mid-Sep, 1-3pm rest of year), Scandinavia's oldest brick church. It was built in 1170 by Valdemar I, partly as a burial sanctuary for his father, Knud Lavard, and partly as a political act, to intertwine the influences of the Valdemar family and the Catholic Church.

Sankt Bendts' most interesting features are its magnificent 14th-century **frescoes**. These include a series depicting Erik IV (1216–50), whose short and turbulent reign saw him warring against his own family and the local peasantry, before he was assassinated on the orders of his brother Abel. The frescoes of Erik (known as 'Ploughpenny' for the despised tax he levied on ploughs) were painted in a doomed campaign to get the dead king canonised. They show Queen Agnes seated on a throne; on her left Ploughpenny's murderers stab the king with a spear, while on the right the king's corpse is retrieved from the sea by fishermen.

The church was a **royal burial place** for 150 years: flat stones in the aisle floor beneath the nave mark the graves of Denmark's early royals. An interesting find came from one of these tombs. Queen Dagmar (1186–1213), the first wife of Valdemar II, was a Bohemian princess revered by the Danes. In 1683, her tomb was opened and a small gold cross with finely detailed enamel work was discovered. Now known as the **Dagmar Cross**, it is thought to date from AD 1000. One side shows Christ with arms outstretched on the cross and the other side depicts him with the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, St John and St Basil. The Byzantine-styled cross is now in the national museum in Copenhagen, with a replica on display in Sankt Bendts Kirke. Copies are traditionally worn by brides who marry in the church.

Note that the church is closed to visitors whenever there are weddings, a particularly common occurrence on Saturdays in April and May.

Køge



Køge

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up into the final piece. It's fascinating, particularly for non-artists, to see the creative process deconstructed.

Sankt Nicolai Kirke

CHURCH

(Kirkestræde 31; admission free; ☀️10am-4pm Mon-Fri, noon-4pm Sun) Named after the patron saint of mariners, the Sankt Nicolai Kirke is two blocks north of Torvet.

On the upper eastern end of the church tower there's a little brick projection called **Lygten**, which was used to hang a burn-

ing lantern as a guide for sailors returning to the harbour. It was from the top of the church tower that Christian IV kept watch on his naval fleet as it successfully defended the town from Swedish invaders during the Battle of Køge Bay.

From July to early August, you can climb the 14th-century **tower** (adult/child 10/5kr; ☀️noon-4pm Mon-Fri), the oldest part of the church. Inside, features worth noting include the ornate 17th-century altar and pulpit, and the carved wooden gallery that raised Køge's nobility above the rabble.

Beaches & Harbour

BEACH

Early risers can watch the fishermen unload herring and eels at the working harbour. The yacht harbour lies 2km to the north, and there are two beaches, lying north and south of the industrial harbour.

The large inlet Køge Bay, which looks as though someone has taken a huge bite out of Zealand's east coast, is well-known for the beaches at Solrød and Greve, 8km and 17km north of Køge respectively. They're a popular escape for the city-dwellers of Copenhagen, just a short ride away on the city's S-train.

KØGE: THE OLD & THE BEAUTIFUL

Storybook buildings pepper the streets of Køge, turning the clock back a few hundred years and firing up the imagination.

West of Torvet (Køge's main square), **Vestergade 7** dates from the 16th century, while **Vestergade 16** dates from 1644. The latter is a remarkably well-preserved merchant's house, featuring old hand-blown glass in the doors and intricately carved detail on the timbers.

Just off the northern edge of Torvet, **Kirkestræde 3** is the house built by Oluf Sandersen and his wife Margareta Jørgensdatter in 1638, the date recorded in the lettering above the gate. Half-timbered **Kirkestræde 13** dates from the 16th century – its twisting chimney pot was an advert to passers-by seeking a blacksmith. Another 17th-century house at **Kirkestræde 10** is now a kindergarten, while **Kirkestræde 20**, built in 1527, is the oldest half-timbered house in Denmark. Its 4m-by-5m dimensions housed a late-19th-century tanner, his wife and 10 children.

Handsome, red-timbered **Nørregade 31** dates back to 1612. South on Nørregade are more houses built in the early 17th century: **Nørregade 5** and **Nørregade 4**, the latter now home to the Køge Museum.

On the corner building at Torvet 2 is a marble **plaque** marked *Kjøge Huskors* (Kjøge and Kjøge are old spellings of Køge). It honours the victims of a witch-hunt in the 17th century, when 16 people were burned at the stake, including two residents of an earlier house on this site. Along the eastern side of Torvet is the yellow neoclassical **Køge Rådhus**, said to be the oldest functioning town hall in Denmark. At the back is a building erected in 1600 to serve as an inn for King Christian IV, when he travelled from his Copenhagen palace to visit his mother at Nykøbing Slot.

By the southeastern corner of Torvet, **Brogade 1** has housed a pharmacy on this site since 1660. Further south at **Brogade 7**, Oluf I Jensens Gård is a courtyard lined with a collection of typical 19th-century merchant buildings. **Brogade 19** is home to Hugos Gård, an even older courtyard. The wine bar Hugos Vinkjælder (see p111) contains a medieval brick-built cellar dating to 1300.

In the adjacent courtyard, at **Brogade 17**, workers unearthed a buried treasure in 1987 – an old wooden trunk filled with over 2000 17th-century silver coins, the largest coin-hoard ever found in Denmark. Some are on display at the Køge Museum. **Brogade 23** was built around 1638, its carved cherubs the work of famed 17th-century artist Abel Schrøder. Across the street, back towards Torvet, **Brogade 16** is famed as Køge's longest timber-framed house, erected in 1636 by the town's mayor.

Sleeping

The tourist office can book rooms in private homes for around 500kr per double; there's a 25kr booking fee.

Vallø Stifts Camping CAMPING GROUND, CABINS €
(☎56 65 28 51; www.valloecamping.dk; Strandvejen 102; camp site per adult/child 72/40kr; ☀Apr-Sep; @☎) Technically part of Vallø, but actually only 1km from the centre of Køge, this lovely, leafy camping ground is inside a seaside nature reserve. It's ideal for families with young children – there are goats, mini-golf, table tennis, pétanque and playgrounds on-site, and a child-friendly beach just across the road. The camping ground also rents out basic four- to six-person wooden huts (per night 325kr to 565kr), as well as blankets, pillows and bed sheets.

Centralhotellet

HOTEL €€

(☎56 65 06 96; Vestergade 3; s/d without bathroom 420/795kr, with bathroom 595/895kr; 📍@) The aptly named Centralhotellet is adjacent to the tourist office. Charming owners Eva and Finn are slowly sprucing up the place, with a dozen very straightforward rooms above a small bar and in a separate wing at the back. Three of the doubles have bathrooms. Bike rental is also available (one/three days 80/200kr).

Hotel Niels Juel

HOTEL €€

(☎56 63 18 00; www.hotelnielsjuel.dk; Toldbodvej 20; s 775-1195kr, d 975-1395kr; 📍@☎) Overlooking the harbour a couple of blocks south of the train station, this pleasant hotel/restaurant combo offers 51 well-furnished rooms in two colour schemes: maritime blue or warm-

and-earthly. All include phone, minibar and satellite TV, and all have been decorated with feng shui principles in mind! Wi-fi is an extra 50kr per 24 hours.



Danhostel Køge

HOSTEL €

(☎56 67 66 50; www.danhostel.dk/koege; Vamdrupvej 1; dm 200kr, s & d 380-480kr; ☺year-round; P@) In a quiet area 2km northwest of town, this friendly 116-bed hostel has small but cosy rooms, all with alarm clocks; those upstairs have velux windows with nice sky views. The more expensive rooms come with bathrooms. There's a laundry, small playground and breakfast buffet (50kr). To get here from Køge, catch bus 101A and get off at Norsvej, from where the hostel is an 850m walk.



Eating

StigAnn

INTERNATIONAL €€

(www.stigann.dk; Sankt Gertruds Stræd 2; lunch 65-110kr, dinner mains 195-255kr; ☺lunch Fri & Sat, dinner Mon-Sat) One of Køge's best restaurants by far offers refined and ambitious Danish dishes with global twists – think smoked duck breast with marinated cranberry and walnut salad, or king prawns with a garlic and papaya chutney. Mains are mostly carnivorous.

Kant

INTERNATIONAL €€

(Brogade 7; lunch 65-110kr, dinner mains 185-218kr; ☺lunch daily, dinner Mon-Sat) Youthful Kant fuses a trendy bistro style with fresh, generous cafe standards like salads, club sandwiches and nachos. Slide onto the lipstick-red sofas for afternoon coffee and cake or tuck into the small but satisfying selection of dinner options, which might include fried mullet with sautéed spinach, mashed potatoes and a splash of lemon. There's a weekend brunch buffet (109kr), as well as alfresco courtyard seating in the warmer months.

Café Vivaldi

INTERNATIONAL €€

(www.cafevivaldi.dk; Torvet 30; lunch 89-109kr, dinner mains 149-199kr; ☺lunch & dinner) This chain 'bistro' is a safe bet for tasty, straightforward cafe grub like salads, sandwiches, burgers, burritos and more substantial meat and fish dishes. Order at the counter. There's seating right on the square and, at weekends, live music and a buzzing bar vibe.

Sandwich Cafeen

SANDWICHES €

(Brogade 19; sandwiches 28-52kr, salads 32-44kr; ☺10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat) Situated in

Hugos Gård, this little shop probably sells the cheapest sandwiches in town. It also peddles salads and milkshakes. Take them away, or devour them at one of the few small tables in the courtyard.

There's a produce, cheese and flower market at Torvet on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.



Drinking

Hugos Vinkjælder

WINE BAR

(Brogade 19; ☺1-11pm Mon-Thu, to 2am Fri & Sat, to 6pm Sun) Hugos is a fantastic place, a dark and cosy little wine bar, curled up in a 14th-century cellar. The wine list is good, but it's the choice of almost 200 beers from around the world that really gives a rush of pleasure. It includes beers from several Danish micro-breweries, including local outfit Bryghuset Braunstein. While you can't buy meals here, you're welcome to buy lunch from Sandwich Cafeen next door and eat it here. In summer, live jazz bands play in the courtyard around noon on Saturday.



Information

Library (www.koegebib.dk; Kirkestræde 18;

☺10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Free internet

Nordea (Torvet 14) Bank with ATMs.

Post office (Jernstøbevænget 2; ☺10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat)

VisitKøge (☎56 67 60 01; www.visitkoege.com; Vestergade 1; ☺9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) The tourist bureau is just off the town's main square.



Getting There & Away

BOAT BornholmerFærgen (☎70 23 15 15; www.bornholmerfaergen.dk) Runs daily, year-round ferries between Køge and Rønne, on the Danish island of Bornholm. From Køge, the ferry departs at 12.30am, arriving in Rønne at 6am. From Rønne, the ferry leaves at 5pm, arriving in Køge at 10.30pm. A single fare costs 266/284/133kr per adult/adult cyclist/12-to-15-year-old. A car including five people costs 1532kr to 1550kr.

CAR Køge is 42km southwest of Copenhagen and 23km southeast of Roskilde. If you're coming by road take the E47/E55 from Copenhagen or Rte 6 from Roskilde and then pick up Rte 151 south into the centre of Køge.

TRAIN Køge is the southernmost station on greater Copenhagen's S-train network, at the end of the E line. Trains from Copenhagen (108kr, 40 minutes) run three to six times an hour. Køge is also on the train line between

Roskilde (48kr, 25 minutes) and Næstved (58kr, 40 minutes), with trains running to both towns approximately every half hour to hour.

i Getting Around

You can hire bikes from Centralhotellet (p110) for 80kr per day, plus a 500kr deposit.

Car drivers can park in Torvet, but only for an hour; turn down Brogade, then follow Fændediget round for less-restricted free parking off Bag Haverne and north of the harbour.

Vallø

Tiny Vallø is a deeply romantic fairy-tale hamlet with cobblestone streets, a dozen mustard-yellow houses and an attractive moat-encircled Renaissance castle, Vallø Slot. Situated in the countryside about 7km south of Køge, Vallø makes a wonderful little excursion for those looking to get off the beaten track.

o Sights

Vallø Slot

CASTLE, GARDENS

(www.valloe-stift.dk) Red-brick Vallø Slot ticks all the 'proper castle' boxes, with pointy turrets and a moat filled with lily pads and croaking frogs. Also like a proper castle, it's not open to riff-raff, ie the public. But you can walk in the beautiful woods and **gardens** (☀8am-sunset) that extend from the castle building all the way to the sea.

Vallø Slot has a rather unusual history. On her birthday in 1737 Queen Sophie Magdalene, who owned the estate, established a foundation that turned the castle into a home for 'spinsters of noble birth'. Unmarried daughters of Danish royalty unable to live in their own castles were allowed to live at Vallø, supported by the foundation and government social programs. In the 1970s, bowing to changing public sentiments, the foundation amended its charter and declined to accept new residents. For now, the castle remains home solely to a handful of ageing blue-blooded women who took up residence before 1976.

The castle has retained its original 16th-century style, although much of it was rebuilt following a fire in 1893.

🍴 Sleeping & Eating



Vallø Slotskro

INN €€

(☎restaurant 56 26 62 66, inn 56 26 70 20; www.valloeslotskro.dk in Danish; Slotsgade 1; 3/4/5/6

courses 400/475/550/600kr; ☺restaurant dinner Wed-Sat; (P) Just outside the castle gate, this 200-year-old inn harbours an elegant restaurant of crisp white linen and decadent Franco-Danish dishes such as quail with foie gras and summer truffles. Alas, the inn's seven double rooms were closed for a revamp during our visit. Check the website for updates, as an overnight stay in Vallø makes for an enchanting retreat.

i Getting There & Away

Take the train to Vallø station, two stops south of Køge, and from there it's an easy 1.25km stroll east down a tree-lined country road to the castle.

If you're travelling by road take Rte 209 south from Køge, turn right onto Billesborgvej and then left (south) onto Valløvej, which leads to Slotsgade.

There's a signposted cycle route from Køge that leads into Valløvej.

Sorø

POP 7805

Thick with old timber-framed houses and framed by peaceful lakes and woodlands, Sorø is a soulful, off-the-radar spot. It owes its existence to Sorø Akademi, an elite school for noblemen's sons established by Christian IV. The academy remains a prestigious school to this day; its grounds and lakeside park are open to the public, and make for an idyllic late-afternoon stroll.

During Denmark's 'Golden Age' (1800–50) of national romanticism, Sorø became a haunt for some of the country's most prominent cultural figures, including Bertel Thorvaldsen, NFS Grundtvig and Adam Oehlenschläger.

o Sights & Activities

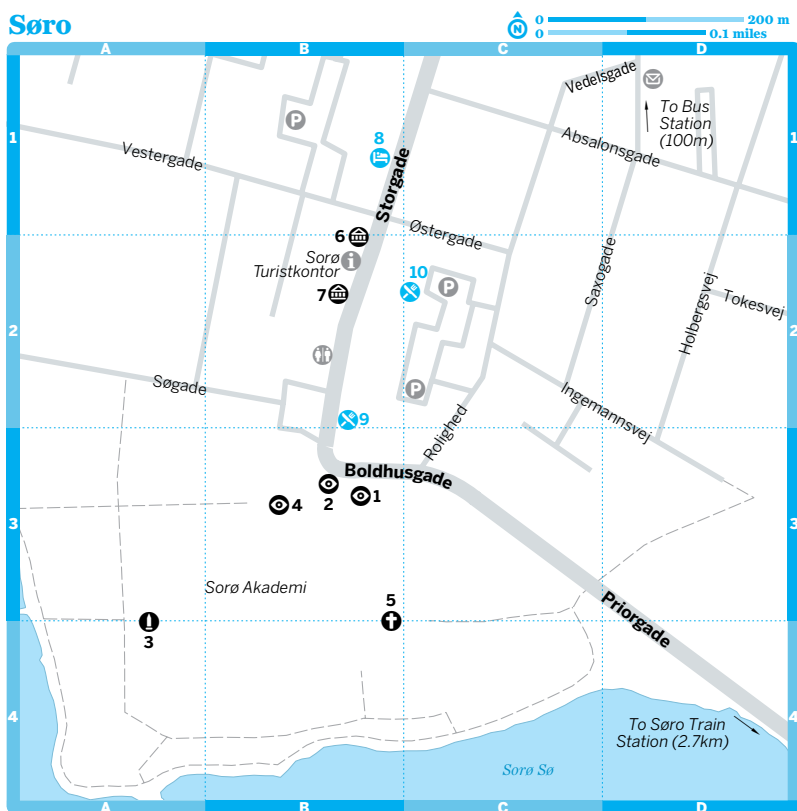
For a dose of vintage charm, slip into **Søgade**, a street that's lined with leaning half-timbered, mustard-yellow houses with red tiled roofs. You'll find it on the west side of the town's main square, Torvet.

Sorø Kirke

CHURCH

(admission free; ☺10am-4pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun) Denmark's largest monastery church, and one of the country's oldest brick buildings, is the 12th-century Sorø Kirke, in the centre of the academy grounds. The Romanesque interior is simple and harmonious, brightened by **medieval frescoes** of blue, red, orange, green and white geometric pat-

Søro



Søro

🗺️ Sights

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| 1 Boldhuset..... | B3 |
| 2 Klosterporten..... | B3 |
| 3 Ludvig Holberg Statue..... | A4 |
| 4 Ridehuset..... | B3 |
| 5 Søro Kirke..... | B3 |
| 6 Søro Museum..... | B2 |
| 7 Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum..... | B2 |

🏠 Sleeping

- | | |
|--------------------------|----|
| 8 Hotel Postgaarden..... | B1 |
|--------------------------|----|

🍴 Eating

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| 9 Ristorante Valencia..... | B2 |
| 10 Super Best Supermarket..... | C2 |

terns, shields and leaves, and lightened by a high 13th-century Gothic ceiling.

Bishop Absalon, a member of the influential Hvide family, was one of Denmark's

most significant medieval statesmen. He established a Cistercian monastery in Søro in 1161 and had this church built in the grounds to serve as a family mausoleum. Famous people who are buried here include the bishop, interred in a prime position directly behind the main altar. In a display cabinet to the right of the altar are the ivory crosier, gold-and-sapphire ring and silver chalice with which he was buried (extracted from his tomb in the 19th century).

Keeping Absalon company are kings Valdemar IV, Christopher II and Oluf III. Queen Margrethe I, the architect of the 1397 Kalmar Union, was buried here as well, but her remains were later transferred to Roskilde Domkirke. At the end of the left aisle is the marble sarcophagus of the great comic poet and playwright Ludvig Holberg.

The church's grand interior includes a 6m-high 16th-century crucifix by Odense sculptor Claus Berg, carved from a single piece of wood, and a beautifully detailed baroque altar and pulpit. The 16th-century **organ** is the centrepiece of the Sorø International Music Festival.

Sorø Akademi HISTORIC BUILDINGS, GARDENS

After the Reformation, Frederik II decreed that Sorø's monastery should be turned into a school. In 1623, his successor, Christian IV, developed it into the Sorø Academy of Knights, an elite establishment dedicated to the education of the sons of the nobility. Lessons included the art of hunting, behaviour and manners – skills fitting to a noble diplomat.

Today its intake is a little less exclusive, but Sorø Akademi remains a prominent Danish school. The extensive grounds are owned by a private foundation (though the school itself is state-funded), and visitors are welcome to amble through them.

The southern end of Sorø's main street, Storgade, leads directly to the academy via **Klosterporten**, a medieval gate that once cloistered the monks from the outside world.

Other medieval monastery buildings were replaced with Renaissance structures – thought to be more conducive to learning – in the 17th century. **Ridehuset**, immediately west of Klosterporten, was built by Christian IV to stable the horses and dogs used for hunting. **Boldhuset**, just east of Klosterporten, also dates from the reign of Christian IV and now houses the library.

A **statue** of the great Danish playwright Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), who rescued the school after a financial crisis forced it to close, can be found in the garden area in the western part of the grounds. Picturesque **walking trails** lead west from the statue down to Sorø Sø.

Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum ART MUSEUM

(Art Museum of West Zealand; www.vestkunst.dk, in Danish; Storgade 9; adult/child 50kr/free; ☺see website) At the time of research, Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum was due to reopen in autumn 2011 after a major refurbishment, including an award-winning extension by Copenhagen-based architects Lundgaard & Tranberg. The museum's booty spans 300 years of Danish art, with works running the gamut from medieval woodcarvings to wildly expressionist modern art. Check

the website for updated opening times and changing exhibitions.

FREE Sorø Museum MUSEUM

(www.aabne-samlinger.dk/SVM/soroe; Storgade 17; ☺1am-4pm Tue-Thu & Sun, 11am-2pm Sat) The regional Sorø Museum is housed in a handsome half-timbered building dating from 1625. It contains rooms with period furnishings, from a peasant's quarters to the stylish living room of an aristocrat. There's also a grocery shop from 1880 and a room furnished with the personal belongings of the 19th-century poet BS Ingemann, who taught at Sorø Akademi. Most of the information is in Danish only.

★ Festivals & Events

The **Sorø International Music Festival** (www.soroemusik.dk, in Danish) is held at Sorø Kirke, with classical concerts held mostly on Wednesday evening from late June to late August; tickets (75kr to 130kr) are available from the tourist office or at the venue 75 minutes before show time.

🛏 Sleeping

Sorø Camping CAMPING GROUND, CABINS €

(☎57 83 02 02; www.soroecamping.dk; Udbyhøjvej 10; camp site per adult/child 79/40kr; ☺Mar-Oct; 📶) Three-star Sorø camping ground has a bucolic setting, on the edge of Pedersborg Sø northwest of town, about 150m north of Slagelsevej. There's a shop and laundry, two family bathrooms, toilets accessible to people in wheelchairs, baby goats, lollipop-making sessions, mini-golf and a 'bouncy pillow' to keep kids amused. Four- to six-person cabins and apartments (per night 450kr to 800kr) are also available. A 1km-long lakeside trail winds its way into town, or take bus 806 or 807. There are bicycles for hire and wi-fi access.

Hotel Postgaarden HOTEL €€

(☎57 83 22 22; www.hotelpostgaarden.dk in Danish; Storgade 25; s/d 750/925kr; 📶) A good choice in the centre of town, this recently refurbished inn-style hotel boasts a 300-year history. Its 18 rooms may not be cutting-edge, but they're pleasant and comfortable. Some face the main pedestrianised street, while others look onto a quiet courtyard. There's a restaurant, wireless internet, and a web-connected computer located in the lobby.

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH & VIKING

Denmark's richest Viking site is the 6th-century Viking manor house on the western shore of lake **Tisso**, between Slagelse and Kalundborg.

The most famous find (so far) is a massive solid-gold necklace, weighing 1.8kg. It's now displayed in Copenhagen's national museum, with a replica in Kalundborg museum. Over 10,000 items have been found since digs began in earnest in 1995, with the extent and high calibre of the finds causing real excitement. An abundance of Arabian and Nordic coins, beautifully cast silver brooches, animal-entwined bronze pendants, a golden hinge, a tuning-peg for a harp, and top-quality sword handles and stirrups, all dating from 500 to 1050 AD, are just some of the aristocratic treasures found.

The manor-house complex, four times the size of any other so far discovered, is thought to have been a royal estate, holiday home, hunting lodge, banquet house or cult centre (20 Thors' hammers have been found there), or possibly some combination of the above. The absence of any graves at the site leads archaeologists to believe that it wasn't a permanent dwelling-place.

Some experts think the site may have been the ancient seat of Viking kings. Artefacts from England, Ireland, Germany and Norway indicate that the manor house's visitors were heavily involved in military adventures and plundering – and therefore the elite of Viking society.

Getting here by public transport is difficult.



Danhostel Sorø

HOSTEL €

(☎57 84 92 00; www.kongskildefriluftsgaard.dk, in Danish; Skælskørvej 34; r 465kr; ☺year-round; ☐) This old lakeside watermill is set in a wonderful spot in the middle of a nature reserve, also known as Kongskilde Friluftsgård. On Rte 157, 9km southwest of town (take bus 615), it's a popular respite for hikers and cyclists – two national cycle routes, Nos 6 and 7, cross right at the inn. Hostel rooms (with washbasins) cost the same whether there's one occupant or four; they're fairly bog-standard and on the dim side, but with all this fresh air about, hopefully you won't spend much time indoors.



Eating

Stovlet-Katrinehus FRENCH-DANISH €€€
(☎57 83 50 80; www.stovletkatrinehus.dk; Slagelsevej 63; 3-/5-course dinner 355/475kr; ☺lunch daily, dinner Mon-Sat) Originally built as a home for Christian VII's mistress, this atmospheric place is on the western edge of town. Today it's a grand gourmet restaurant, serving splendid French-influenced Scandi dishes such as grilled Norwegian lobster with rosehip compote, red currant, orange foam, malt and avocado cream. A wine selection matches each course. To get here from the centre of town, walk north along Storgade, turning left into Hauchsvej (which becomes Kongebrovej). The restaurant is

at the end of the street (on the corner with Slagelsevej).

Ristorante Valencia

ITALIAN €€

(www.valencia.dk in Danish; Storgade 6; lunch meals 45-99kr, dinner mains 120-255kr; ☺lunch & dinner) This friendly Italian bistro-restaurant makes a great lunch stop, with a creamy interior cooled by breezy fans, and a view onto Torvet. Open sandwiches are big and beautifully presented, and there are one or two veggie choices. In the evening, there's a decent choice of Italian-, French- and Spanish-inspired meat and fish dishes.

There are several places to get cheap meals including a bakery and a takeaway pizzeria on Storgade. You can buy groceries at the **Super Best supermarket** (Storgade 28).

Information

Library (Storgade 7; ☺2-7pm Mon, 10am-6pm Tue, Thu & Fri, 10am-7pm Wed, 10am-1pm Sat) Free internet access.

Nordea (Storgade 22) One of several banks in town.

Post office (Rådhusvej 6; ☺noon-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat)

Sorø Turistkontor (☎57 82 10 12; www.soroe.dk/cms/site.aspx?p=1504, in Danish; Storgade 15; ☺1-5pm Mon, 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Jun-Aug, reduced hrs rest of year) Sorø's tourist office.

i Getting There & Away

CAR Sorø is 15km east of Slagelse and 16km west of Ringsted via Rte 150 or the E20.

TRAIN Sorø train station is in Frederiksberg, 3km south of the town centre – buses 806 and 570 run from central Sorø to the train station at least half-hourly. Sorø is on the line between Copenhagen (89kr, 50 minutes) and Odense (164kr, 50 minutes), with trains running approximately every 30 to 60 minutes. Nearby towns on the same line include Slagelse (39kr, 10 minutes), Korsør (52kr, 20 minutes), Ringsted (39kr, 10 minutes) and Roskilde (49kr, 25 minutes).

Trelleborg

The best preserved of the four Viking ring fortresses in Denmark, Trelleborg is 7km west of Slagelse and 22km west of Sorø. Admittedly, Slagelse is rather uninspiring, so consider making Sorø your base if staying overnight. If you choose to stay in Slagelse, contact the **Slagelse Turistbureau** (☎70 25 22 06; www.visitsydvestsjælland.dk) for accommodation options.

👁 Sights



Trelleborg

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

(www.vikingeborg.dk; Trelleborg Allé 4; adult/under 18yr 60kr/free; ☀10am-5pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sat Apr, May, Sep & Oct) History buffs will revel in visiting one of the most important Viking Age sites, while others may just enjoy strolling the site, which is in a deeply peaceful countryside setting at the confluence of two gurgling streams.

Museum

Before you head across the meadows to the fortress itself, visit the small but very informative museum, which explains how the fort was built, occupied and abandoned.

Displays contain weapons belonging to soldiers at the fort (spearheads, axes, arrowheads and shield bosses), as well as everyday items (pottery, bronze jewellery, locks and keys, combs and loom weights). There are also two skeletons from the graveyard.

The Fortress

Trelleborg was constructed as a circular fortress, built to a precise mathematical plan (see the boxed text, this page) and home to a garrison of around 500 soldiers, plus craftsmen and some women and children. Huge earthen banks, 17m wide and 6m high, formed a protective wall around the fort. Inside, two streets divided the circle into quarters, each containing four longhouses set around a courtyard. Two nearby streams gave the inhabitants boat access inland and out to the sea.

Trelleborg's impressive scale and strategic position, and the similarly designed forts at Fyrkat, Nonnebakken and Aggersborg, indicate a powerful 10th-century force at work, with immense manpower to command. Dendrochronology has shown that the trees for the palisade (which added an extra defensive layer to the earth banks) were cut down in AD 980, during the reign of Harald Bluetooth. One theory is that the forts were built by Harald after an uprising led by his son, Svein Forkbeard.

TRELLEBORG: VIKING PRECISION

While Vikings aren't usually associated with scientific sophistication in the popular imagination, Trelleborg's military origins are visible in its precise mathematical layout and use of the Roman foot (29.33cm) as a unit of measurement.

The Trelleborg compound consists of two wards that encompass about 7 hectares in all. The inner ward is embraced by a circular earthen rampart 6m high and 17m thick at its base. Four gates, one at each point of the compass, cut through the rampart. The ward is crossed by two streets, one east–west, the other north–south, which divide it into four symmetrical quadrants. In Viking times, each quadrant contained four long elliptical buildings surrounding a courtyard. Each of the 16 buildings was exactly 100 Roman feet long and contained a central hall and two smaller rooms.

An 18m-wide ditch ran around the exterior of the inner rampart; two bridges spanned the ditch, crossing over to the outer ward. This outer ward contained a cemetery holding about 135 graves and 15 buildings, each of which was 90 Roman feet long and lined up radially with its gable pointing towards the inner rampart. The buildings lying in the outer ward have no fireplaces, and so possibly functioned as storehouses.

A second earthen rampart separated the outer ward from the surrounding countryside.

THE GREAT BELT

The **Storebælts-forbindelsen** (Great Belt Fixed Link; www.storebaelt.dk; one-way toll motorcycle 115-220kr, small/medium/large car 115/220/335kr) is the stuff that engineers lust over. Spanning a whopping 18km, its combination of two bridges, island and tunnel allow the E20 motorway to connect Denmark's largest and third-largest islands, Zealand and Funen. It's an amazing piece of design and worth an admiring gasp. After all, the highest points in Denmark are the tops of the two 254m pylons on the East Bridge, which joins Zealand to Sprogø Island before carrying cars onwards over the West Bridge to Funen. The bridges look particularly stunning at night, glittering and twinkling against a black backdrop.

Three kilometres to the south on the Zealand side is **Korsør**, a one-time booming ferry town thanks to its position at the narrowest point between Zealand and Funen. The opening of the Storebælts-forbindelsen changed all that, turning the transport hub into another victim of progress. While the town itself has no major drawcards, it is home to the **Korsør By og Overfartsmuseum** (Korsør Town & Ferry Service Museum; www.byogoverfartsmuseet.dk, in Danish; Søbatteriet 3; adult/child 15/5kr; ☺11am-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-mid-Dec), a museum dedicated to the ferries and icebreakers that traversed the Store Bælt over the past two centuries. (After all, everyone deserves a little love, right?)

Korsør's new train station is 3km north of town, by the Storebælt link. It's on the main line between Zealand and Funen, with trains running roughly every half hour to Copenhagen (124kr, one hour) and Odense (132kr, 30 minutes). Local buses 35 and 501 connect the train station to Korsør's town centre (26kr, 20 minutes).

Hints of big trouble are littered across Trelleborg. The fort was occupied for a very short space of time, before being abandoned around 990. There are signs of a large fire, and a **Viking graveyard** lying within the fort's outer defences contains two mass graves, both containing the bodies of men in their 20s and 30s.

Despite the passing of a millennium since its construction, the **circular earthen mound** is perfectly intact. Naturally, the wooden structures that once stood inside it have long since decayed, but the post holes and gable ends of the buildings have been filled with cement to show the outlines of the house foundations. You can walk up onto the grassy circular rampart and readily grasp the strikingly precise geometric design of the fortress. Grazing sheep imbue the scene with a timeless aura.

Reconstructions

Several Viking-era buildings have been reconstructed at the site, using authentic materials and methods. The most impressive is the **replica longhouse**, built in 1941 in Viking stave style. Sit quietly on one of the sleeping benches that line the walls, watching the swallows dart through the doorways and the smoke hole, and you half expect one of the fortress's former inhabitants to wander in.

Since it was built, archaeologists have changed their opinion on the external appearance of the longhouse. They now think that there was no outer gallery and that the roof was much lower – still, 10 out of 10 for effort.

A few reconstructed houses are clustered together to form **'Trelleborg'**, a tiny Viking village, with bemocked interpreters doing chores of the period such as sharpening axes, chopping wood and baking bread. From June to August, there are often activities for children, such as archery demonstrations and pottery workshops.

i Getting There & Away

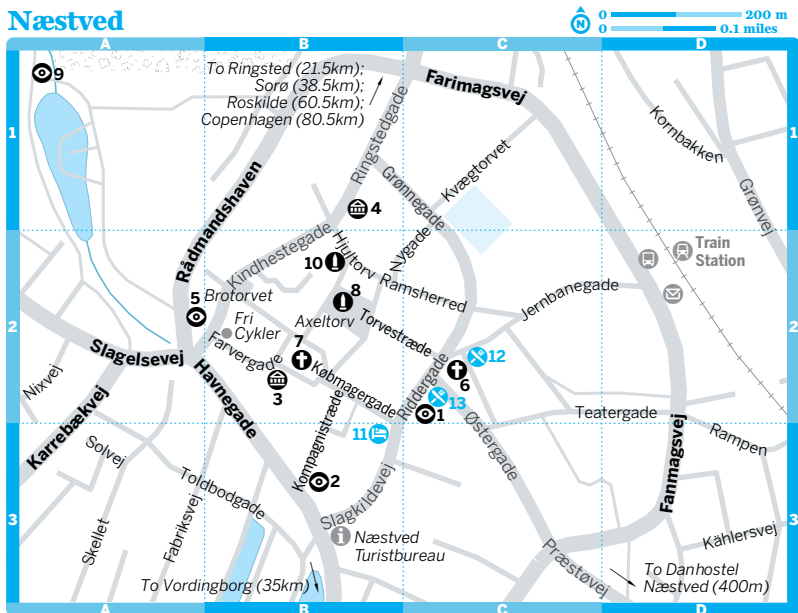
BUS & TRAIN Bus 312 runs from Slagelse to Trelleborg (26kr, 15 minutes) from Sunday to Friday. There are around seven buses per day, with the first leaving Slagelse at 7am and the last (to arrive within the museum's opening hours) at 2.56pm (June to August) and 1.56pm (April, May, September and October). Trains run frequently between Slagelse and Copenhagen (109kr, one hour).

CAR Driving from Slagelse, take Strandvejen to its end at the village of Hejninge and then follow the signs to Trelleborg, 1km further on.

TAXI From Slagelse, a taxi to the site costs about 190kr on weekdays, 220kr on weekends. To book one, call **Slagelse Taxa** (☎58 53 53 53).

Næstved

ZEALAND SOUTHERN ZEALAND



Næstved & Around

POP 41,665

Drivers' hearts may sink as they enter Næstved, the largest settlement in the region, which at first glance appears to be nothing more than a mess of ring roads, slip roads and junctions. However, if you ditch the car and persevere to the pedestrianised heart, you'll discover a lively and cosy town dotted with medieval buildings (including two Gothic churches).

Næstved makes a convenient base from which to buzz in on some of Denmark's top family-oriented tourist attractions, all within a 10km radius – BonBon-Land theme park, the glassworks Holmegaard Glasværker and Næstved Zoo. More sedate types can explore the lakes and forests to the south and west, or join the happy throngs at seaside Karrebæksminde.

Sights

NÆSTVED

Sankt Peders Kirke

CHURCH
(Sct Peders Kirkeplads; admission free; ☉10am-3pm Mon-Fri) The large high-Gothic Sankt Peders Kirke features some notable 14th-century frescoes. One depicts Machiavellian King Valdemar IV and his queen Helvig

kneeling before God. The Latin inscription to the left of the king translates as: 'In 1375, the day before the feast of St Crispin, King Valdemar died, do not forget it'.

Sankt Mortens Kirke

CHURCH

(Kattebjerg 2; admission free; ☉9am-1pm & 2-5pm Tue-Fri) Also built in brick, the smaller Sankt Mortens Kirke has a strikingly similar design to Sankt Peders Kirke, and is decorated inside with period frescoes. You can see examples from a renowned 17th-century family woodcarving workshop here – a pulpit, carved by Schrøder senior, and the fabulously detailed 6m-high altar by his son, master craftsman Abel, covered in characteristic grimacing masks and stooping, moustached figures.

FREE Næstved Museum

MUSEUM

(www.naestved-museum.dk; Sct Peders Kirkeplads; ☉10am-2pm Tue, Wed, Fri & Sat, to 6pm Thu, 1-4pm Sun) Næstved Museum is split over two buildings, in different parts of town.

Næstved's oldest building, **Helligåndshuset** (House of the Holy Ghost; Ringstedgade 4), was built in the 14th century as a religiously run hospital/orphanage/old people's home. Today it contains the museum's local history section. There's a roomful of finds from

Næstved

📍 Sights

- 1 Apostelhuset.....C2
- 2 KompagnihusetB3
- 3 Næstved Museum - BoderneB2
- 4 Næstved Museum -
Helligåndshuset B1
- 5 Rådhuskirken.....A2
- 6 Sankt Mortens Kirke.....C2
- 7 Sankt Peders Kirke.....B2
- 8 Sculpture.....B2
- 9 Suså Kanouldøjning.....A1
- 10 Tiny Statue.....B2

🛌 Sleeping

- 11 Hotel KirstineB3

🍴 Eating

- 12 Café Oliver.....C2
- 13 Peperoncino SicilianoC2

a Viking Age site at Vester Egesborg (10km south of Næstved), as well as 13th- and 14th-century church carvings, exhibits on farming, trade and peasant life, some nicely presented old toys, and a section on the military in Næstved. Most of the information is in Danish, but the helpful museum staff will explain anything you can't translate.

Boderne (Sct Peders Kirkeplads), once a row of upmarket medieval flats, now displays ceramics and glass from two big craft workshops in the area: Kählers Keramiske Værksted and Holmegaard Glasværker.

Buildings & Monuments

HISTORIC BUILDINGS, MONUMENTS

The most stand-out medieval house is **Apostelhuset** (Riddergade 5), which takes its name from 13 exterior wooden braces separating the windows. Christ stands on the central brace, with six apostles on either side, each clutching their associated symbols or instruments of torture, and standing on the head of a gruesome monster. Dating from about 1510, they're among the oldest and best-preserved timber-frame carvings in Denmark.

The country's only remaining medieval guildhall, **Kompagnihuset** (Kompagnistræde), is a timber-framed building constructed in 1493. It gets its name from a later use – Christian IV gave it to a Spanish trading company to use as their headquarters.

Also with roots in the medieval period is the old town hall, **Rådhuskirken**, the brick

and half-timbered building at the north-western side of Sankt Peders Kirke.

The town's most novel curiosity is Denmark's smallest equestrian **statue** (Hjultorv). The tiny bronze, depicting Næstved's founder Peder Bodilsen, is only 42cm high and sits on top of a tall brick pedestal. In the adjoining square, Axeltorv, you'll find a rather curious **sculpture** by renowned artist Bjørn Nørgaard, entitled *Hanging Tits and Her Daughters from Rønnebæksholm*. According to Zealand folklore, 'Hanging Tits' was a giant hunter known for throwing her pendulous breasts over her shoulders while on the job.

AROUND NÆSTVED

BonBon-Land

AMUSEMENT PARK

(www.bonbonland.dk; Gartnervej 2, Holme Olstrup; admission high/low season 219/199kr, online tickets 175kr; ☺10am-7pm late Jun-early Aug, reduced hrs rest of year, closed late Oct-mid-Apr) One of Denmark's top five tourist attractions is the theme park BonBon-Land. Its biggest ride is the bonkers-looking Wild Boar rollercoaster, which sets off vertically before plunging into freefall, then looping-the-loop at speeds of up to 74km per hour. The other 60 or so amusements and rides are tamer, but your kids will love you for taking them there... especially when they hear about the sweets that shot the BonBon confectionary company to success – Dog Farts, Big Boobs and Seagull Plop.

BonBon-Land is about 7km east of Næstved: follow road 54, signposted to Rønnede. Trains to Holme Olstrup (32kr, 10 minutes) run every 30 to 60 minutes; the theme park is 300m from the station.

Holmegaard Park

GLASSWORKS

(www.holmegaardpark.dk, in Danish; Glasværksvej 54; adult/4-11yr/under 4yr 59/49kr/free; ☺science centre & candy store/workshop 10am-4pm Thu-Sun, shops 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun, brew-house restaurant 10am-6pm Sun-Thu, to 9pm Fri & Sat) Anyone hypnotised by melting toffee-like glass can indulge at Holmegaard Glasværker, Denmark's principal glassworks. The company has turned the factory into a 'visitor experience' by adding attendant attractions – you can watch sweets and chocolates being made, sample beer from the on-site micro-brewery, visit the Holmegaard shop or try your hand at glass-blowing (149kr). There's little in life more satisfying than producing your own lopsided masterpiece, but be warned: the glass takes two hours to cool,

and the glass-blowing area closes two hours before main closing times, so it's a morning activity only. Access for people in wheelchairs is very good.

Holmegaard is at Fensmark, about 8km northeast of Næstved. Take road 54 out of town, following signs to Rønede/Fensmark; the glassworks is well signposted. Bus 602 (32kr, 20 minutes) from Næstved stops 350m short of Holmegaard Glasværker.

Zoopark Sydsjælland ZOO
(www.zoopark.dk in Danish; Ålestokvej 2; adult/3-11yr 95/55kr; ☀10am-6pm Mon, Wed, Fri & Sun, to 8pm Thu & Sat late Jun-early Aug, reduced hrs rest of year, closed mid-Oct-Easter) Kids will especially love this petting zoo, where visitors can get close to a cute cast of critters that include alpacas, does, kangaroos and American bison. Residents you won't be patting are the tigers, among them a majestic white tiger. You'll find the zoo southwest of Næstved, off the Karrebæksminde road.

Karrebæksminde TOWN
Karrebæksminde, 10km southwest of Næstved, is the beach resort where stressed-out town-dwellers go to unwind. It's a pretty self-contained place, with harbours, hotels, camping grounds, restaurants, supermarkets and its own seasonal tourist office. Bus 603 (32kr, 20 minutes) runs there from Næstved.



Activities



Suså Kanoudejning CANOEING
(☎57 64 61 44; www.kanoudejning.dk, in Danish; Slusehuset, Næsbyholm Allé 6) The calm waters of the Suså River make for good canoeing – you can paddle upstream through tranquil greenery for several days. Suså Kanoudejning is a canoe-hire company tucked away in the large park just north of the centre. In July and early August, you can rent canoes for 370/660/830kr per one/two/three days Monday to Thursday, or 420/760/980kr Friday to Sunday. At other times phone their office for assistance. Make your booking at least a day in advance; and bring cash, as the company doesn't have credit card facilities.

There's a hostel for canoeists in Skelby, located halfway between Næstved and Sorø (see following).



Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office maintains a booklet of private rooms available for rent in the greater

Næstved area, with singles from around 175kr, doubles from around 350kr.

Danhostel Næstved HOSTEL €
(☎55 72 20 91; www.danhostelnaestved.dk; Præstøvej 65; dm 190-240kr, s/d with bathroom 495/545kr; ☀Feb-Nov; 📞) This hostel is based in a red-brick 1970s nunnery. You'll find modern rooms here, most with bathrooms, plus a laundry, small playground, life-size garden chess set and wi-fi. The hostel is 1km from the town centre: head south from the train station and then continue east along Præstøvej.

Depotet HOSTEL €
(☎26 20 97 19; www.depotet-susaa.dk; Buen 18, Skelby; s/d 325/580kr; ☀May-mid-Sep; 📞) Almost halfway between Næstved and Sorø this is a cheerful, homely little hostel set up for passing canoeists. It has a dock, cosy rooms, a warm and inviting lounge, a laundry and guest kitchen.

Hotel Kirstine HOTEL €€
(☎55 77 47 00; www.hotelkirstine.dk; Købmagergade 20; s/d incl breakfast 845/1025kr; 📞) The most charming place to stay is this romantic little hotel in the heart of Næstved. Crooked, cosy rooms roll out the red carpet, old furniture, cable TV and minibar (with complimentary drinks), while the downstairs lounge areas are supremely snug. Best of all is the hotel's **restaurant** (☀lunch & dinner), set in a glassed-in arcade and serving beautiful, seasonally inspired dishes like freshly caught brill with apples, radishes and chervil. If you're a nonsmoker, specifically ask for a nonsmoking room.

Café Oliver INTERNATIONAL €€
(Jernbanegade 2; lunch 79-109kr, dinner mains 179-199kr; ☀lunch & dinner) On the sunny side of the street, trendy Oliver is the coolest spot to hang in Næstved. Perfect-looking blond, sunglasses people sit at the scattering of outdoor tables to enjoy coffee, a glass of wine or lunchtime sandwiches, burgers, salads and vegetable lasagne. Evening mains change with the seasons, but include dishes such as guinea fowl breast in a gorgonzola sauce.

Peperoncino Siciliano ITALIAN €€
(Riddergade 1A; mains 129-230kr; ☀dinner) Weathered beams and dark brick walls lend a dim and cosy feel to this restaurant on one of Næstved's older streets. As you'd guess, this place specialises in Italian meals.

There's a small, rich, meat selection, and a longer list containing all the spaghetti, fettuccine and penne your mamma could feed you, including several veggie options.

i Information

Danske Bank (Hjultorv 18) One of several in the town centre.

Næstved Hovedbibliotek (Kvægtorvet 4-6; ☎10am-7pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) The central library, above the Kvikly supermarkedt, has free internet access.

Næstved Turistbureau (☎55 72 11 22; www.visitnaestved.com; Det Gule Pakhus, Havnen 1; ☎9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat mid-Jun-mid-Aug) Helpful staff.

Post office (☎10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) By the train station.

i Getting There & Around

The bus and train stations are close together on Farimagtsvej, opposite its intersection with Jernbanegade.

BICYCLE You can hire bicycles from **Fri Cykler** (Brotorvet 3; ☎9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 6pm Fri, to 2pm Sat) for 75/395kr per day/week, plus a 100kr deposit.

CAR The road system around Næstved (25km south of Ringsted and 28km north of Vordingborg) is fairly unpleasant for Denmark, as Rtes 14, 22, 54 and 265 all meet here in a disorientating tangle. Abandon the car as soon as possible (the car park outside Kvikly supermarkedt is central).

TRAIN Trains run about half-hourly from Copenhagen (100kr, one hour) and Roskilde (58kr, 35 minutes to one hour). There are also regular services to Vordingborg (48kr, 20 minutes), Køge (58kr, 40 minutes) and Ringsted (40kr, 20 minutes).

Vordingborg

POP 11,610

It's worth popping in to Vordingborg on your way to the southern islands, to saunter up the cosy pedestrian avenue Algade and climb the medieval Goose Tower.

If you've time, Knudshoved Odde peninsula is a short drive from town. Here you can find a few public parking spots with access to grassy lawns and very narrow rocky beaches, where you can swim if the temperature's right.

Vordingborg's large natural harbour and strategic location on the strait played an important role in Denmark's early history. It was the royal residence of Valdemar I,

who reunited the Danish kingdom in 1157 after a period of civil war, and it continued to be a favoured residence of Valdemar's descendants.

👁 Sights

Gåsetårnet HISTORIC BUILDING, RUIN
(Goose Tower; Slotsruinen 1; adult/under 18yr incl Sydsjællands Museum 45kr/free, tower only 30kr/free; ☎10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-May) The 14th-century Gåsetårnet, once part of a huge royal castle and fortress, is Scandinavia's best-preserved medieval tower and the only structure remaining from the Valdemar era. The name stems from 1365, when Valdemar IV placed a golden goose on top of the tower to express his scorn for the German Hanseatic League's declaration of war (Valdemar referred to the league as 'cackling geese'). The rest of the fortress, including seven other towers, has been demolished over the centuries but the 36m-high Gåsetårnet was spared because of its function as a navigational landmark. The tower's walls are an impressive 1m (3ft) thick in places, and you can climb the 107 steps for some pleasing views. Information boards are in Danish and German.

The fortress grounds, which have been turned into a park with walking paths, contain various brick and stone **foundation ruins** and a small **botanical garden** (admission free).

Sydsjællands Museum MUSEUM
(adult/under 18yr 30kr/free; ☎10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-May) In addition, the fortress grounds hold the Sydsjællands Museum, southern Zealand's regional history museum. At the time of writing, the museum was set to close temporarily as construction of a new museum building was planned to commence. Its interesting collection includes Stone Age weaponry, plus the bones of elk, wild pigs, wolves and deer killed with the bone and flint arrows and harpoons. There are also sections on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Vor Frue Kirke CHURCH
(Kirketorvet; admission free; ☎10am-3pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug) Along the way, on the western side of Algade, is the brick-built Vor Frue Kirke, whose oldest section is a mid-15th-century nave. Inside are elegant frescoes, and a baroque altarpiece created in 1642 by master-carver Abel Schröder.

Activities

Knudshoved Odde

WALKING

If you have your own transport, Knudshoved Odde, the narrow 18km-long peninsula west of Vordingborg, offers some hiking opportunities in an area known for its 'Bronze Age landscape'. A small herd of American buffalo roam the land, brought in by the Rosenfeldt family who own Knudshoved Odde. There's a car park (15kr) about halfway down the peninsula, where the trail begins.

Sleeping

There are a few private homes in the Vordingborg area with rooms for rent for around 200kr for singles and 400kr for doubles – the tourist office should be able to give you a list.

Danhostel Vordingborg

HOSTEL €

(☎55 36 08 00; www.danhostel.dk/vordingborg; Præstegårdsvej 18; dm/s/d without bathroom 150/250/400kr, s/d 350/500kr; ☺year-round; P@) This 112-bed hostel, about 2km north of town, is in a peaceful rural area, surrounded by paths and lakes. Rooms are pleasant and facilities include a laundry.

Ore Strand Camping

CAMPING GROUND, CABINS €

(☎55 77 88 22; www.orestrandcamping.dk; Orevej 145; camp site per adult/child 70/35kr) The kitchen and toilets at this camping ground are on the dark and battered side, but the staff here are such sweeties, and the seafront location is so pleasant, that we would still recommend it. The beach has a Blue Flag award. The site is 2km southwest of town, and is well signposted.

Hotel Kong Valdemar

HOTEL €€

(☎55 34 30 95; www.hotelkongvaldemar.dk; Algade 101; s/d incl breakfast 675/875kr; P@) Opposite Gæstærnet in the town centre, this hotel has 60 bland rooms with bathroom and TV. The recently changed management plans to spruce up the place.

Eating

Babette

DANISH, INTERNATIONAL €€

(☎55 34 30 30; www.babette.dk, in Danish; Kildemarksvej 5; 3-/5-course menu 495/595kr; ☺lunch & dinner Wed-Fri, dinner Sat) If you're in the region it's definitely worth visiting Babette, 1km north of the centre, for a full gastronomic and aesthetic treat. The restaurant

(named after the film *Babette's Feast*) is well known for its original pan-European cuisine, making use of local seasonal ingredients in sometimes unusual combinations – braised Duroc pork belly with fruit syrup, buckthorn and carrots, anyone? Culinary prowess aside, Babette is also blessed with a panoramic surf-and-turf vista. Book ahead.

Cafe Oscar

DANISH, INTERNATIONAL €€

(www.babette.dk in Danish; Nordhavnsvej 8; meals 68-195kr; ☺lunch & dinner Thu-Sun May, Tue-Sun Jun-Aug) Seasonal, affordable and snugly set in an old salting hut by the harbour, it's hard not to love Oscar. Run by the team from Babette (you're in capable hands!), its menu is reassuringly short, simple and fresh. Made-from-scratch salads, sandwiches and a gourmet burger spell lunch, while dinner usually offers a soup, pasta dish, meat and fish main... Oh, and that lip-smacking burger. More of a grazer? Opt for the plate of Danish cheese with olives and bread.

Café Piaf

INTERNATIONAL €

(Algade 85; sandwiches 60-80kr, tapas 95kr; ☺10.30am-5.30pm Mon & Tue, to 9pm Wed-Fri, to 3pm Sat) This friendly cafe, decorated with works by local artists, is a good central spot for salads, burgers, nachos and hearty steaks. There's a decent brunch for 95kr and homemade cake for that afternoon sugar fix.

Information

Nordea (Algade 78) One of several banks on Algade.

Post office (Rådhusortvet) In the Kvickly supermarket building, off Algade.

Vordingborg Turistkontor (☎55 34 11 11; www.visitvordingborg.dk; Slotsruinen 1) Inside the Sydsjællands Museum, next to the Goose Tower. At the time of research, the tourist office was set to move temporarily while construction of a new museum building commenced. Check the tourist office website for updates.

Getting There & Away

Vordingborg is 28km south of Næstved via Rte 22, and 13km from Møn via Rte 59.

By train, Vordingborg is around 75 minutes from Copenhagen (124kr) and 20 minutes from Næstved (48kr). If you're en route to Møn, you'll need to switch from the train to the bus at Vordingborg train station; see p125.

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