



Northern Jutland

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Why Go?

Northern Jutland, split from the rest of Jutland by the Limfjord, wows visitors with its magnificent light and beautiful barren landscapes of shifting sands. The region is promoted as 'Lysets Land', or the Land of Light, and if you witness the soft blue nuances by the water as day turns into night, you'll understand why (and begin to comprehend the region's appeal to artists).

But it's not just painters who flock here. Windsurfers and beach-goers make a beeline for the north the minute the weather turns kind. Families head off to the zoos, aquariums and funparks, and seafood-lovers rejoice in the fresh-off-the-boat catch.

The area's most coveted tourist destination is Skagen, at Denmark's northern tip. It's both a civilised haven of chichi restaurants and art museums, and a wild place where nature calls the shots – which sums up the entire region, really.

When to Go

Summer is prime time to visit the north. The beaches, theme parks, festivals and activities are in full swing in July and August, when accommodation prices hit their peak. The shoulder season (May, June, September) usually offers decent weather and smaller crowds.

Aalborg has year-round attractions and events, including its popular Carnival celebrations in May, and plenty of performances in its arresting new concert hall. There's also some appeal to the notion of rugging up and braving the cooler weather someplace such as Skagen, where you can admire the turbulent tides and shifting sands without the summer crowds and high-season prices. Winter is better for the Danish art of *hygge* (cosiness), after all.

Aalborg

POP 130,900

Things are on the way up for Aalborg, Denmark's fourth-largest city. It sits at the narrowest point of the Limfjord (the long body of water that slices Jutland in two), and recent developments have seen the waterfront become the focal point of the town. A concerted effort is being made to rejuvenate the central industrial areas and turn neglected spaces into something far more appealing.

Traditionally Aalborg has flown under the traveller's radar, but that could easily change. There are enough low-key diversions here to occupy a few days for most visitors, from architecture fans to families, and party animals to history boffins.

Sights & Activities

Utzon Center

ARCHITECTURE, MUSEUM

(www.utzoncenter.dk; Slotspladsen 4; adult/child Dkr60/free; ☉10am-5pm Tue-Sun, open Mon in Jul) An impressive 700-sq-metre design and architecture space, the Utzon Center, with its distinctive silver roofscape, sits pretty on the waterfront. It bills itself as 'a dynamic and experimental centre of culture and knowledge' and is the last building designed by celebrated Danish architect, Jørn Utzon (1918-2008). Utzon famously designed the Sydney Opera House; he grew up in Aalborg and died shortly after this eponymous centre was finished.

The centre hosts a changing program of exhibitions on architecture, design and art; there's also a high-quality restaurant.

Waterfront

LANDMARK

The Aalborg waterfront promenade, extending east from Limfjordsbroen, is a good example of urban regeneration, taking what was a scruffy dockside area and opening it up to locals. Here you'll find restaurants, a park, playground, basketball courts and moored boats (including an old ice-breaker, now a restaurant-bar). One of the best features is the **Aalborg Havnebad** (Jomfru Ane Parken 6; ☉daily mid-Jun-Aug) **FREE**, a summertime outdoor pool that lets you take a dip in the Limfjord.

East of the Utzon Center there's more new development, including university buildings and smart, low-cost housing for the city's growing student population. The latest addition is the shiny new **Musikkens Hus** (www.musikkenshus.dk; Musikkens Plads 1),

a first-class, futuristic-looking concert hall that opened in 2014.

An anachronism among all this new development, the mid-16th-century, half-timbered **Aalborghus Slot** (Slotspladsen; ☉dungeon 8am-3pm Mon-Fri May-Oct) **FREE** is more an administrative office than a castle, but there's a small dungeon you can visit.

Nordkraft

CULTURAL CENTRE

(www.nordkraft.dk; Kjellerups Torv; ☉7am-11pm) Once a power station, this cultural centre is home to a theatre, concert venue, art-house cinema, gallery, fitness centre, plus a couple of eateries. The small tourist office is also here, so it's worth popping in to see what's happening locally.

Budolfi Domkirke

CHURCH

(www.aalborgdomkirke.dk; Algade 40; ☉9am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat Jun-Aug, 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Sep-May) This 12th-century cathedral marks the centre of the old town and its elegant carillon can be heard every hour, on the hour. Its whitewashed interior creates an almost Mediterranean ambience.

As you enter the cathedral from Algade, look up at the foyer ceiling to see colourful frescoes from around 1500. The interior boasts some beautifully carved items, including a gilded baroque altar and a richly detailed pulpit.

Aalborg Historiske Museum

MUSEUM

(www.nordmus.dk; Algade 48; adult/child Dkr30/free; ☉10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Dec, to 4pm Jan-Mar) Just west of Budolfi Domkirke is the town's history museum, with artefacts from prehistory to the present, and furnishings and interiors that hint at the wealth Aalborg's merchants enjoyed during the Renaissance.

Gråbrødre kloster Museet

MUSEUM

(www.nordmus.dk; Algade 19; ☉10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar) This underground museum allows you to step off one of Aalborg's busiest shopping streets to explore the life of a Franciscan friary in medieval times. Entry is via an **elevator** outside Salling department store on Algade; the museum is free to enter, but you pay to ride the elevator (Dkr40 per group).

Helligåndsklostret

MONASTERY

(CW Obels Plads; adult/child Dkr50/free; ☉tours 2pm Tue & Thu Jul-Aug) An alley off Algade leads to the rambling Monastery of the Holy Ghost, which dates from 1431 and is home to