
Denmark / Copenhagen

The largest city in Scandinavia, with a population of about 1.4 million (a quarter of the total population), Copenhagen is on the Northeastern shore of Zealand, the largest of Denmark's approximately 500 islands. Here you can walk along the same beautiful streets that Hans Christian Andersen used to enjoy while thinking out his wonderful stories like "The Ugly Duckling". You might also go and visit the princess of the harbour, The Little Mermaid.

With its expansive parks, waterways and lively pedestrian streets, the Danish capital is among the most youthful and exuberant cities in northern Europe. Students, sailors and visitors from all over the world mix on the streets, drinking beer at outdoor cafes and performing music on the sidewalks. There are modern department stores, tiny boutiques, bars and theatres, just about everything except cars and automotive pollution.

Telephone and time difference

Access code to USA: 009 (dial tone). To phone Denmark: 45; time difference (Eastern Daylight) plus 6 hours.

Climate

Thanks to the Gulf stream Denmark has a rather mild, if somewhat undramatic climate. The average daytime temperature from June to August is 70°F (20°C). Due to its northerly latitude Copenhagen gets sunshine long into the evenings during the summer months, but once the sun goes down it gets chilly. Summer also brings a good deal of rain and fog. Winters have much less sun but have an average temperature just above 32°F (0°C), and snow is infrequent.

Museums and Sights

Copenhagen is a pedestrians paradise and it is also very easy to get around by bike. The medieval city center around Rådhuspladsen is well worth a visit.

Another thing you might want to see is "Tivoli" The amusement park. It is open from May to September from 10.00 am to midnight. Most people visit it in the evenings, when the grounds are romantically illuminated and there are sometimes closing fireworks. It is definitely worthwhile but not cheap.

From Rådhuspladsen you can walk to Christiansborg Palace with the seat of Danish Government on one side and the royal reception rooms on the other.

Copenhagens most recent attraction is the Tycho Brahe Planetarium, Gammel Kongevej 10, within walking distance from Tivoli. The projector can make 8900 fixed stars "shine" in the building's huge dome. It is open daily.

Beer enthusiasts will want to make a pilgrimage to the city's breweries; Carlsberg, Carlsbergvej 140 and Tuborg, Strandvejen 54, both have tours.

Theatre and Nightlife

Night time in Copenhagen offers a wide range of options. The tourist office distributes "After Midnight" a guide to Copenhagens nightlife.

Most bars and discos in the town center are packed and designed for mass consumption. In bars not so near the center the beer is cheaper and the atmosphere friendlier. Some discos require special dress and you may be asked to buy a phony membership card at the door. So make sure you enquire before you set out.

The music cafes are a much better deal and are much friendlier. Try Daddy's Dancehall on Axelstorv 9 or La Fontaine, Kompagnistraede 11. For modern Jazz try Jazzhouse Montmartre. On Ny Vestergade 7, you will find The Mermaid Theatre, Scandinavia's only permanent English language stage.

Shopping

Shopping hours: Weekdays generally 9.30 am-5.30 pm. Sat. 9 am to 1 or 2 pm Many shops stay open till 7 pm on Fridays, some department stores even to 8 pm. The best place to go is Strøget, a pedestrian street linking Rådhuspladsen and Kongens Nytorv. It, in fact, consists of five streets; Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelkaftet, Amagertorv and Ostergade. Parallel to it are; on one side the Farvergade, Kompagnistraede, and Laederstraede, and on the other side the Latin quarter around the university.

Excursions

The entire island of Zealand is a suburb of Copenhagen. Castles, museums and beaches are all within easy reach, never more than an hours busride away.

Roskilde, about an hours drive to the west, has a lot of Danish history to offer its visitors. King Harald Bluetooth made this his capital and evangelical seat in 980. Here you will also find the Viking Ship Museum; housing five ship, sunk to bar the entrance of enemy fleets. Danish royalty are still buried in the Cathedral and their tombs are there for us to admire. You can make walking tours around the old quarter of the town, and on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, there is a large vegetable, fruit and flower Market.

Fredensborg Castle is the spring and autumn residence of the royal family. When the queen is in residence there is a colorful changing of the guard. The park is free and open all year round from 9 am to 5 pm. The castle, too, can be visited but you will have to pay admission.

The Lyngby area offers lots of attractions; there is Dyrehaven, a large park on the former royal hunting ground with in the middle of it a small castle: Eremitageslotten. On the Southern edge of Dyrehaven is Bakken, Copenhagens other amusement park, though the atmosphere cannot compare with Tivoli, the admission to this park is free and the old wood roller coaster makes a visit worthwhile. North of Lyngby in Sorgenfri you will find Frilandsmuseet, an open-air museum containing over 100 authentic old buildings from around the country.

The most spectacular castle in Denmark lies in Hillerød about an hours drive to the north of Copenhagen. Frederiksborg Slot (ca 1560) has moats, lovely gardens, brick ramparts and the worlds first elevator throne.