

An Introduction to Denmark

Danish Consulate General
New York, March 20, 2000
Rapport nr. 2000-03

Latest revision, July 2001

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1. Geography

Denmark is a small country, about three times the size of Long Island, with a population two-thirds as big as New York City's. It is located in western Europe, north of Germany and west of Sweden. Apart from the mainland of Jutland and 406 islands, the country also includes the Faroe Islands, in the Norwegian Sea, and Greenland, the world's largest island, which extends north of the Arctic Circle. Copenhagen, Denmark's capital, is situated in the east, on the island of Zealand.

Landscape and Resources

Denmark is a low, flat country, with its highest point just 568 feet above sea level. The next-highest point, at an elevation of 482 feet, is known as Himmelbjerget, or "Heaven Mountain," but in fact there are no real mountains in Denmark.

There is bedrock on the island of Bornholm, but otherwise most of the land is composed of clay or moraine, a sandy mixture of earth and stones left behind by glaciers. Most of the land in Denmark, about 64 percent, is used for farming; 11 percent is covered by deciduous or coniferous forest, while meadow, heath, marshland, bogs, dunes, and lakes constitute about 10 percent. Built-up areas account for the remainder.

Denmark is poor in mineral deposits, but has sizable quantities of chalk, which is used to produce cement, and the North Sea provides more than enough oil and natural gas for the purposes of home consumption.

Population

The population of Denmark is about 5.2 million, including 400,000 citizens of foreign origin. In addition, there is a small German minority in southern Jutland. The official language of Denmark is Danish (but 75 percent of Danes can understand English). The vast majority of Danes are baptized as Lutherans. Denmark is therefore very homogeneous, both ethnically and culturally.

Eighty-five percent of all Danes live in towns. The metropolitan Copenhagen region has approximately 1,770,000 inhabitants. The second-biggest city is Århus, with a population of about 240,000. In addition, a network of medium-size towns covers the entire country.



Denmark is in northern Europe.

Official Name: Kingdom of Denmark

Area: 16,600 square miles

Population: 5.2 million

Capital: København (Copenhagen)

Currency: krone (crown)

Language: Danish



Danes love to bike—whether on holiday or on their way to work.

Industry

Denmark has a developed industrial economy. The agricultural sector is particularly advanced, producing a surplus of manufactured foods, which are then exported to other countries. Despite its small size, Denmark has a wide variety of industries. Apart from its agricultural products, some of the commodities for which Denmark is known abroad are beer, medicines, furniture, shipping, and products of the metal industries.

Agriculture and fisheries employ just 5 percent of the population, while 26 percent work in industry and construction. The remaining 69 percent are employed in the service economy: 31 percent in the public sector and 38 percent in the private, which includes the shipping trade, a traditionally strong Danish business.

Infrastructure

Denmark is well supplied with roads, and travel routes are in good shape throughout the country. In addition to railways and air links, for quick transportation ferries and a large number of bridges also connect the islands. Kastrup, just outside of Copenhagen, is the largest international airport in the country, and serves as a hub for air traffic to and from other Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland). Apart from trains, buses, and cars, though, the bicycle is also a common way to get around. Most Danes own bikes and many people use them to go to and from work each day.

Climate

Denmark's climate is temperate, with rainfall providing all the water it needs. Given the country's position on the edge of the European continent, near large areas of open sea and in the path of prevailing westerly winds, Danish summers tend to be cool. The mean temperatures are around 51° F. Winters there are not particularly cold, either, with mean temperatures of around 30° F.



Fishing in the North Sea.



Harvesting in August.

Denmark has an average of 170 days a year with some form of precipitation: rain, snow, sleet, or fog. In summer, sudden and powerful showers are common, although these downpours rarely last long. The weather tends to be rainy throughout the year, with the highest rainfall occurring in September, October, and November.

Danish weather is also highly variable: In the space of a few days, the weather may change from steady precipitation, preceding a warm front, to brighter or slightly misty weather, possibly with a little drizzle as the warmer air moves in. Finally, the passage of the cold front will produce precipitation in the form of heavy showers, followed by clear weather with few clouds.

There is little difference in temperature from one place to another. In winter, the lowest temperatures can be found in areas that are removed from the sea. In summer, the highest average temperatures occur in southern Zealand and Lolland-Falster. Areas near the coast experience smaller differences in temperature between summer and winter, due to the equalizing effect of the sea. During June and July it is rarely dark at night, and the "white nights" of summer are something every Dane looks forward to.

Environment

Danes are very aware of their environment, and recycle almost all of their garbage—in some towns, in fact, there are no trash cans at all!

One example of Denmark's commitment to recycling: Unlike other countries in Europe, which use cans for most beverages, Danes prefer glass bottles, which are better for the environment. Also, in Danish stores you have to pay for plastic and paper bags, which encourages shoppers to reuse them rather than throw them away.

Energy

Most of Denmark's energy is supplied by coal (imported), oil and natural gas (extracted from the North Sea), and wind (which is free). Straw and other biological fuels meet smaller proportions of its energy needs. Alternative sources, such as wind power, solar energy, and geothermal heat, are also used increasingly, for both economic and environmental reasons. When these are combined with efficient insulation, it is even possible to produce zero-energy homes.



A zero-energy house with solar panels on the roof. More and more Danes are using alternative energy sources—wind power, solar energy, and geothermal heat—for economic and environmental reasons alike.



Wind is an increasingly important source of energy in Denmark. The country also exports windmills, like the ones shown here, around the world.

**Average temperatures:
Summer: 51° F
Winter: 30° F**

2. History

In the Beginning . . .

Denmark has not always been a land of cornfields, bridges, and flowering cities. Five thousand years ago a dense forest dominated by lindens covered the country. Most of the inhabitants made their home along the coast and lived on fish and shellfish, supplemented by hunting seals and game. In those days, Danes worshiped the ancient Nordic gods, Odin and Thor chief among them, and when a powerful tribesman passed away he was laid to rest in a burial mound, together with his slaves, animals, wives, and belongings. Even today these graves can be found scattered around the country, and by examining their contents, researchers have been able to assemble an accurate picture of life in that period.

A few miraculously well-preserved bodies have been found in Danish bogs. Tollund Man and Graubølle Man both date from the early Iron Age, and were probably thrown in the water as punishment or as an offering to the gods. Their remains give us a good idea of what people looked like in their day. Another famous historic find was the Golden Horns (created between 400 and 550 A.D.), featuring the longest runic inscriptions of any Danish artifact.

The Danes

The origin of the people known as the Danes can be traced back to around 500 A.D., when a tribe calling itself the Danes migrated from Sweden with the declared intent of conquering what is now Denmark. Their language, preserved in a handful of writings, was a northern German dialect, already slightly different from German itself. Today Danish is very different from both Swedish and German in tone and spelling, though most Danes are able to understand Swedish.

When the Vikings Ruled the Sea

Around 800 A.D., the Danish Viking Godfred took up the challenge posed by the Christian Franks to the south and staked out the boundaries of the

country now known as Denmark. Over the next 300 years or so, Scandinavian Vikings played a prominent role in many of the most important and dramatic events in European history.



The head of Tollund Man



A Viking blowing a *lur*.

In one respect especially, the Vikings had the upper hand over other people of that time: their fast, seaworthy warships. With their open, square-rigged vessels, the Vikings plied Europe's coastal waters, acting as traders, pirates, and colonizers. The word *Viking* (which probably means "one who fights at sea," or "battle at sea") can be found on several Scandinavian runic stones from that period.

Trelleborg

The Viking fort at Trelleborg, on the southern tip of Sweden (which used to be part of the Danish kingdom), was built in strict accordance with a geometrical plan. Its circular ramparts have openings at each of the four compass points, connected by tracks paved with wooden blocks. The space within the ramparts, measuring 500 feet in diameter, is divided into four sections, with wooden farm buildings laid out in the shape of a quadrangle. Surrounding the ramparts outside is a moat, then another grouping of 15 houses, along with the fort's burial site, protected by a second moat. Three similar complexes have been found in Denmark, all dating back to around 980 A.D.

The Jelling Stone

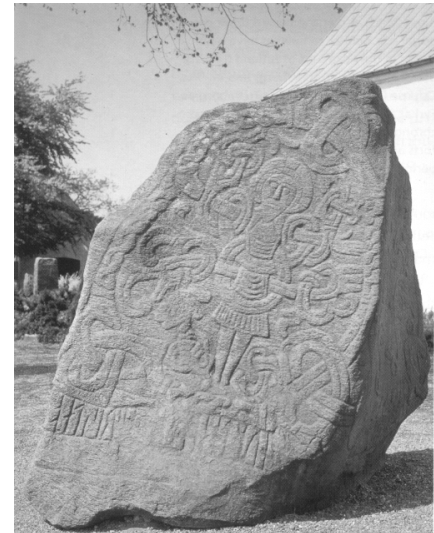
Sometimes referred to as Denmark's birth certificate, the enormous Jelling Stone has a runic inscription carved on its side, stating that King Harald Bluetooth, who ruled from 950 to 985, "conquered Denmark and made the Danes Christians." Also on the stone is a relief carving of Christ on the cross. Today it can be found outside the church in Jelling, not far from the site where it was originally discovered.

The Vikings Shaped Denmark

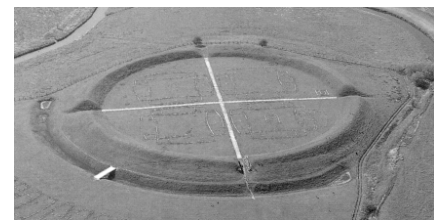
The adventurous Vikings ruled the North Sea and the Baltic, and the continental rivers adjacent to them, for long periods. On one of their trips they even visited North America. Several Danish towns that began as Viking settlements are now over 1,000 years old. Copenhagen, the Danish capital, which started out with nothing but a few fishermen, some traders, and a marketplace, was founded more than 800 years ago.



A reconstructed Viking ship.



The Jelling Stone.



The Viking fortress at Trelleborg.

Christian IV

Ever since King Gorm the Old (900-950), Denmark has been a monarchy, and King Christian IV (1588-1648) was the most famous monarch of all. King Christian, a man of exceptional energy, also inherited boundless wealth and power, and while some of his grand projects met with failure, he contributed enormously to the flowering of Danish architecture, painting, music, and business. Indeed, many of Denmark's magnificent Renaissance buildings—among them the Round Tower and the Old Stock Exchange—would not have existed without generous donations from the king's coffers.

Although the Danish national anthem portrays Christian IV as a victorious potentate, he was less impressive in battle than he was at building the capital, losing one war after the next. During his reign, Denmark saw its position as the dominant Scandinavian nation and a great power in Europe begins to slip away. Nevertheless, he is still admired today for his outstanding support of architecture and government.

The Constitution

In 1848, Denmark's Liberal Party called on King Frederik VII to abandon the system of absolute monarchy and convene a democratically elected national assembly, which would then draft a constitution to establish the rights of each and every citizen. This did happen, but not until after the Danish-German War of 1848-49.

The "June Constitution" (signed into force on June 5, 1849) was extremely liberal for its time, turning Denmark overnight into the most democratic country in Europe. Unfortunately, it was difficult to enforce, since the king was not willing to give up his power. In the end, the entire monarchy was reconstructed and Danish citizens received many basic rights, which they still possess to this day.



King Christian X on horseback during the first year of German occupation. The king became the nation's father figure and a symbol of unity for the Danes.

The German Occupation: 1940–1945

German troops occupied Denmark in the space of a few hours on the morning of April 9, 1940. King Christian X and the Danish government agreed to let them in, provided the occupiers respected Denmark's political independence. Some argued that a country as small as Denmark had no choice. Thus began a "peaceful occupation" during which Denmark tried to maintain the illusion of independence.

The Danish government continued to function until 1943, when German pressure began to stir resentment among the Danes. As the war turned against the Germans, a resistance movement arose. Most of its members were young people who specialized in sabotaging factories and railways. Faced with the Germans' demand for sabotage to be punished by death, the Danish government stepped down in August 1943.

From then on, the country was ruled as a German dictatorship.

Much blood was shed in the battle between the resistance movement and the occupying forces that also included Danes who chose to collaborate with the enemy. When the war ended, in 1945, Denmark was granted status as an Allied nation, and it became a founding member of the United Nations in June 1945.

The Rescue of the Danish Jews

During the German Gestapo's action against Danish Jews on the night of October 1, 1943, more than 7,000 people fled to Sweden. It was a dangerous operation getting them out, but many ordinary Danes helped with the illegal rescue effort. In the end, 481 Danish Jews were deported to the concentration camp of Theresienstadt, located in the Czech Lands. Most of them, though, survived to return home.

Scandinavia, NATO, and the EU

In the wake of World War II, there were attempts to establish a Nordic defensive alliance, but in April 1949, after the breakdown of negotiations among the Nordic states, Denmark and Norway became founding members of NATO.

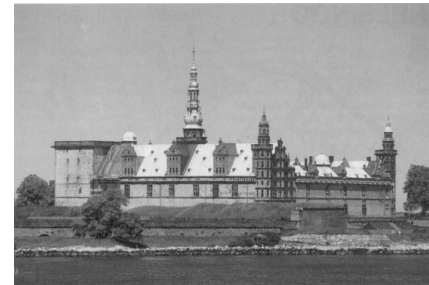
Denmark, as a country with few raw materials and therefore heavily dependent on foreign trade, was keen to join the European Economic Community (EEC) from the outset. When Britain, a major trading partner, became a member of the EEC in 1973, Denmark followed suit. (The EEC changed its name to the European Union, or EU, in 1993.)

Denmark's relationship with the EU has always been controversial. Despite a solid parliamentary majority in favor of continued membership and further integration, the public has been split almost equally in every referendum ever held on the matter.

The Welfare State

Since the creation of the welfare state in the 1970s, Denmark has boasted one of the highest standards of living in the world. Its welfare policy includes a highly developed social security system, which

guarantees that no one will suffer a serious decline in their standard of living due to illness or unemployment. In addition, anyone aged 67 or older is entitled to an old-age pension, and every Dane has the right to a free education, whether vocational or academic, at every level. Naturally, the cost of such a comprehensive program is considerable, and Denmark's high income tax reflects this.



Kronborg Castle used to guard Copenhagen. It was this castle that Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote *Hamlet*.

Politics

Denmark has a single-chamber parliamentary system. Danish Parliament, the Folketing, has 179 members, including two from the Faroe Islands and two from Greenland. To get into the Folketing, a party must win at least two percent of the popular vote, and seats are allotted in proportion to the number of votes a party receives.

Currently there are ten parties represented in the Folketing. It is also interesting to note that close to one-third of the seats in the Folketing are held by women.

The voting age in Denmark is 18, and about one Dane in ten is active in a political party. Although the Social Democrats have been in government more years than any other party, the Danish political system ensures that no party can govern alone. The legislative process is based on cooperation between parties, so most issues are decided before the vote is taken.



The Folketing is located on an island in the middle of Copenhagen.

The average Danish household has 2.23 people, and Danish women have an average of 1.8 children each.

85 percent of Danish women are employed.

**Average annual income per person:
Men: 250,000 crowns (\$29,000)
Women: 220,000 crowns (\$25,500)**

3. The Royal House

The royal house, in a broad sense, is the reigning monarch's family and relatives; in a narrower sense, it is a circle of closely related individuals of royal rank who are subject to special rules. Currently, in addition to Queen Margrethe II, this circle is made up of Prince Henrik, Crown Prince Frederik, Prince Joachim and his wife, Princess Alexandra, plus all the other princes and princesses in line for succession to the throne. None of these people may travel abroad or enter into marriage without the permission of the monarch (in this case, the queen).

Denmark has what is known as a limited monarchy. This means that, formally, the king or queen is the head of state and represents Denmark abroad, but he or she cannot intervene in the day-to-day affairs of the country. The queen's signature on official documents, for instance, is only valid if accompanied by that of a minister. On the other hand, she retains a special role in the formation of the government, since according to the Danish constitution it is the monarch who appoints and dismisses the prime minister and other government officials.

A Short History of the Monarchy

Once a year, on New Year's Eve, Queen Margrethe appears on television to address the nation directly. Virtually everyone in Denmark tunes in to the broadcast, eager to hear what she has to say. Danes are proud of their queen, and appreciate her dignified yet warm and friendly nature. Her authority derives from more than just her personality, though.

The Danish monarchy has its roots deep in the nation's history. The Danish royal house can be traced back to Gorm the Old and his son Harald Bluetooth, who moved the royal residence to Zealand. Originally the monarch was chosen by an election limited to the royal house, though not to males only. The Danish crown reached its culmination with the Valdemars, whose influence extended over most of the Baltics in the 12th

century, and again later with Queen Margrethe I, who in the late 14th century united Scandinavia in the Kalmar Union.



The royal family (left to right): Prince Joachim, Queen Margrethe II, Prince Henrik, and Crown Prince Frederik.

The House of Oldenburg

After the direct lines died out, in 1448 Count Christian of Oldenburg was elected king of Denmark under the name Christian I. His direct successors from the House of Oldenburg adopted alternately the names of Frederik and Christian, beginning with the election of Frederik I in 1523. This continued through the reign of Frederik VII, who passed away without an heir in 1863. The elective monarchy existed until 1660, when Frederik III introduced a hereditary monarchy for Denmark and Norway. This legislation remained in force until the introduction of a constitutional monarchy by Frederik VII under the terms of the June Constitution of 1849, which, as noted in Chapter 2,

reduced the crown's power significantly.

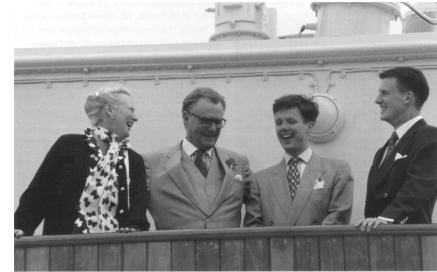
The House of Glücksborg

The Danish Queen Margrethe II belongs to the House of Glücksborg. When Frederik VII died without a successor in 1863, Prince Christian of Glücksborg took the throne as Christian IX. Nearly 100 years later, the 1953 Act of Succession established the House of Glücksborg's right of succession.

Under this act, sons take precedence over daughters; in the event there are no sons, the eldest daughter inherits the throne. Thus, after her father's death in 1972, Princess Margrethe was crowned as Margrethe II, becoming the first female monarch since the death of Margrethe I in 1412.

The Danish Royal Family

On June 10, 1967, Queen Margrethe II married Henri-Marie-Jean-André, the Count of Laborde de Monpezat in France, who then became Henrik, Prince of Denmark. The royal couple has two sons, Crown Prince Frederik and Prince Joachim, who in 1995 married Princess Alexandra, née Alexandra Christina Manley.



The royal family aboard the royal yacht *Dannebrog*.



The Danish queen, like the British one, has her own personal guard.

4. The National Flag

Danes fly their flag with pride. People in the countryside often have their own flagpole set squarely in the middle of their garden. On holidays and birthdays Danes use miniature flags as table decorations, and Christmas trees, too, are adorned with the flag. Shops and advertisers use the Danish flag to promote their wares, while Danish soccer fans were the first to paint their faces with the national flag. To display the flag in Denmark, though, is not a sign of nationalism but rather a cultural custom.

The Origin of the Dannebrog

Denmark's red-and-white flag is known by the name of Dannebrog, meaning, "flag of the Danes" or "the red flag." Legend has it that the Dannebrog fell from the sky on June 15, 1219, during the Battle of Lyndanise in Estonia, which was then part of the Danish kingdom.

Valdemar Atterdag, who ruled from 1340 to 1376, was probably the first Danish king to use the Dannebrog. In 1591 Christian IV decreed that Danish coins be struck with a cross, which quickly became associated with the cross of the Dannebrog. During the Romantic era, the Dannebrog won a special place in the hearts of the people, and served as an inspiration to painters and poets.



C.A. Lorenzen's 1809 painting of Dannebrog falling from the sky.



Hoisting the Dannebrog.

Days on which the flag is flown:

Sundays
Weddings and Anniversaries
Birthdays (including members of the royal family)
April 9: German Occupation of Denmark, 1940 (the flag is flown at half-mast until 12 p.m.)
May 5: Liberation of Denmark, 1945
June 5: Constitution Day
June 15: Valdemar Day
Religious Holidays
New Year's Day

5. Church and Religion

Out of every 100 Danes, 90 are members of the Lutheran Evangelical Church, in other words Protestants. According to the constitution, the Lutheran Church is the established church of Denmark.

Various other Christian churches are represented in Denmark, and have been accorded the status of officially recognized religious communities. These are (in order of size) the Roman Catholic Church (approximately 32,000 members), the Danish Baptist Church (just under 6,000 members), and the Pentecostalist church (roughly 5,000 members).

In addition, there are several communities with 3,000 or fewer members that are also worthy of mention: the Seventh Day Adventists, the Catholic Apostolic Church, the Reformed churches in Fredericia and Copenhagen, the Salvation Army, the Methodist Church, the Anglican Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church in Copenhagen.

Marriage and Family Names

In Denmark it is normal for a couple to live together for a long time in what is known as a "paperless marriage." It is also considered normal for couples to have children without being married, and many women keep their maiden names when they are wed, which means that Danish children often inherit double-barreled names.

Gay couples in Denmark may register their partnerships, giving them the same status as a married heterosexual couple. Although same-sex couples are not wed in church, the Lutheran church gives them its blessing.



A typical village church.



A Danish wedding.

6. Culture

Danes like to think of themselves as efficient, environmentally conscious, and generous to those less fortunate than themselves. In general, Danes are good at cooperating and are proud of their ability to get along with other people. One example of this (also mentioned in Chapter 2) is that decisions in Parliament tend to be made by consensus rather than by majority vote.

High Standards

Danes expect high standards from the goods and services they buy. They expect the trains to run on time, the streets to be clean, and tradespeople to know their business, which they do. Danes are also concerned about what they eat: they insist on quality and organic products, and are generally distrustful of any sort of additives. Historically, too, Danes have been concerned that their policies and behavior be *miljøvenlig* (pronounced "mill-YIH-ven-li"), that is "environmentally friendly." To be *miljøvenlig* is viewed as socially responsible and part of a healthy lifestyle. This is why Danes are so good at recycling trash and sewage.

Health

A newborn Danish girl can expect to live to 78; a boy, to 72. While the birthrate in Denmark has been stagnant for some time, for the last four or five years it has been on the upswing.

The most common cause of death among Danes is heart disease (killing 30 percent of men, and 27 percent of women). Suicide, although frequently cited as a cause of death, in 1992 was responsible for just 2.4 percent of deaths among men, and 1.3 percent among women.

Overall, Danes are in good health, and the country's favorable living conditions are confirmed by statistics which show that the average height of Danish men called up for military service has increased over the last 100 years by 4.7 inches, to 71.1 inches (roughly 5 feet, 11 inches).

Language

Danish is an old language, related to both German and the old Viking tongue. Many Danish words are recycled. For instance, *hej* (pronounced "hie") means "hello," but *hej hej* means "goodbye," while the verb *at lide* can mean either "to suffer" or "to like." The pronunciation of Danish is not easy to learn because the consonants are often softly enunciated, which makes them difficult for the untrained ear to detect. Then there are the Danish vowels *æ*, *ø*, and *å* which sound strange at first. But Danes are patient teachers and are very tolerant of foreigners who are trying to learn their language.



All retired Danes receive an old-age pension.

Danish Media

Denmark has seven nationwide newspapers, but most Danes get their news from the two largest TV channels, one of which is state-owned. In addition to the two nationwide TV channels and four nationwide radio services, there are 60 local television

stations and 300 local radio stations. A hybrid network for cable transmission of television and radio, with the potential to provide two-way communications, home monitoring, home banking, and other services, is available to every household in Denmark.

Danish Culture

Traditionally, Danes have been eager culture consumers. About 11,500 books are published yearly, and there are 42 daily newspapers. Each year, too, libraries lend about 113 million books and 9 million records and audiotape cassettes.

The government supports Danish culture, and some artists even receive lifelong grants. The Ministry of Culture also heavily subsidizes the Danish theaters and the Danish film industry, but the government has no input on which plays or films are produced.

Schools

Virtually all children in Denmark attend public schools and all public schools are free. Only a small number of students (fewer than 10 percent) choose to attend private schools, which must be paid for by their parents. College or university are also free in Denmark, with students receiving grants from the state on a monthly basis.

Sports

Soccer (or football, as it is known in Europe) is the national sport, but swimming, sailing, cycling, and cross-country running are also very popular. A growing number of people go jogging in the morning or evening. Denmark has won Olympic gold medals in team handball, sailing, riding, shooting, swimming, rowing, tug-of-war, and cycling.

Lifestyle

Danes have a strong sense of order. You do not eat at your desk or driving in the car. You do not walk down the street eating a hot dog. You eat sitting down at a table, using a knife and fork. This sense of order can also be seen in the fact that pedestrians

in Denmark actually wait for the green light before they cross the road, even in the middle of the night.



Taking a nap.

Hygge and Janteloven

To really get to grips with the Danish character, there are two words it is crucial to understand: *hygge* ("HOO-guh") and *Janteloven* ("YEN-tell-oh-en"). The love of, or need for, *hygge* is a key part of the Danish mentality. Though sometimes translated as "cozy," *hygge* has more to do with the atmosphere between people than the atmosphere of a physical space. *Hygge* is the way Danes create intimacy: a special feeling of friendship, conviviality, and contentment, all rolled into one. There is nothing Danes love more than a *hyggelig* atmosphere, which includes bread and coffee in the morning and candles in the evening.

Because Denmark is such a small country, Danes do not like it when someone tries to be "more than they really are." You will rarely hear Danes boast of their success or their new big fancy company car. This fear of stepping out has come to be

known as *Janteloven* ("small-town law"), and most Danes agree that this humility has both its good sides and its bad. This is why Danes like to speak of their quality of life, and try not to focus too much on purely material wealth.

Danish Christmas: Food and Family

December 24, Christmas Eve, is the biggest night of the year, with food, presents, and family gatherings. The traditional Christmas dinner in Denmark starts out with roast pork, duck, goose, or turkey (or even a combination of them). Then the menu moves on to hot rice pudding or a cold rice dessert. Whoever finds the almond hidden in the dish wins the *mandelgaven* ("almond gift"). It takes a long time to make all the food, but most Danes still prepare Christmas at home in their own kitchens. The next day, officially at least, things get back to normal. But in fact they hardly ever do. Not yet. The Christmas tree is still standing there, as *hyggeligt* as can be. The temptation is great to relight the candles and let Christmas quietly continue on until New Year's Eve.

Danish Cuisine

The heart of Danish food is not in any particular dish, but rather the whole idea and execution of the cold buffet. The basic elements are bread, *pålæg* (cold meat, fish, or cheese), and *tilbehør* (condiments placed on top of the *pålæg*). Not just any combination will do, however. Certain *tilbehør* are used with certain *pålæg*, and certain *pålæg* are used with certain breads. The bread is either rye or white and is always eaten buttered. The most common open-faced sandwiches are smoked herring garnished with egg yolk, radishes, and chives; smoked eel with scrambled eggs; pork with red cabbage, apples, and prunes; and liver paste with pickled cucumber. Otherwise, Denmark has made few original contributions to gastronomy, apart from *wienerbrød* (Danish pastry).

Madpakken

The packed lunch, or *madpakken*, is still the most common way for Danes to eat lunch. Open-faced sandwiches with sausages, sliced meats, cheese,

etc., are the most popular, with the individual items wrapped in sheets of greaseproof paper. Children in Denmark bring their own *madpakke* to school each day.



Packing lunch.



***Frikadeller* (a traditional dish).**

Ingredients:

1 lb. pork and beef (mixed, half and half)

4-5 tbsp. flour

1 whole egg

1 medium grated onion

½ cup milk

salt and pepper

fat for frying

Mix ingredients in a bowl and shape into meatballs. Heat the fat in a pan, adding the meatballs, and fry until they are done.

7. Major Tourist Attractions

The Little Mermaid

The statue of the Little Mermaid, made in 1913, was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale of the same name. Donated to the city of Copenhagen by the famous brewer Carl Jacobsen of the Carlsberg dynasty, this elegant bronze monument, located along the waterfront, is undoubtedly the country's best-known attraction, attracting millions of camera-wielding tourists each year. Twice the Little Mermaid has been decapitated by pranksters, but the original molds still survive, so each time a new head was cast and the statue was restored.

Tivoli

Tivoli is the name of the world-famous amusement park in downtown Copenhagen. Founded in 1843, the park has been visited by 270 million fun-seekers in its lifetime. Thousands of flower bulbs are planted each year to cover the 20-acre site, which abounds in snack bars, restaurants, rides, and games. Tivoli is a clean and cheerful place, offering everything from cotton candy and nightly fireworks to classical music and pantomime.

Legoland

This site features towns and landscapes from around the globe (including the Mount Rushmore memorial), built using a total of 45 million Lego bricks! Legoland also has an amusement park, and its Doll Museum attracts doll lovers from all over the world.

Amalienborg Palace

Home of the Danish queen, Amalienborg lacks the gold trimmings to be described as truly palatial, but is nonetheless impressive with its spacious, open, and stately square. A number of the rooms are open to the public, featuring the original interiors of the private chambers and a fine display of precious gems belonging to the royal family.



The new Storebælt bridge, which connects Funen and Zealand.



Tivoli by night.

Christiansborg Palace

Denmark is governed from Christiansborg, on the isle of Slotsholmen in the middle of Copenhagen (see picture, page 10). Most of the government's 24 ministries are located here, but some have run out of space and moved elsewhere. Fire and reconstruction have taken their toll over the years, as the current Christiansborg complex is the sixth castle or palace on the site since 1167.

8. Famous Danes

Denmark's most famous philosopher, **Søren Kierkegaard** (1812-1855) wrote many books on Christianity and the philosophical problems of modern existence. He also coined such philosophical phrases as "Life is lived forwards, but is understood backwards" and "If you marry, you will regret it. If you don't, you will regret it too."



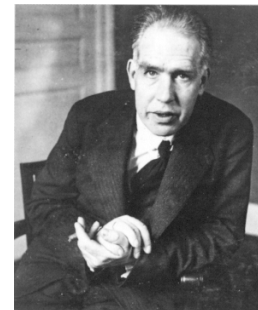
Søren Kierkegaard

The fairy tales of **Hans Christian Andersen** (1805-1875) have enchanted children and adults alike in more than 80 countries. Born on the island of Funen to a shoemaker and a washerwoman, as an adult Andersen's writing was renowned throughout Europe. Although he penned more than 190 tales, translated into 131 languages, only a handful is widely known. His most famous stories are "The Tinderbox," "The Nightingale," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and "The Ugly Duckling." His fanciful paper cuttings are also very famous.



Hans Christian Andersen

Nobel Prize winning physicist **Niels Bohr** (1885-1962) was one of the fathers of atomic energy and also helped define the periodic table. A brilliant researcher and one of the greatest personalities in modern science, he was also greatly concerned about the consequences of the invention of the nuclear bomb.



Niels Bohr

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) is Denmark's greatest symphony composer; Leonard Bernstein championed his works. Born into poverty on Funen, Nielsen got his first job at the age of 14 as a bugler with the local regiment. He grew up close to the city of Odense, which now honors him every four years with the Carl Nielsen International Violin Competition.



Carl Nielsen

Karen Blixen (1885-1962) wrote several novels and collections of stories in both Danish and English. For the publication of her *Seven Gothic Tales* (1934), she invented the pseudonym Isak Dinesen, and went on to use it for the rest of her life.

For many years she lived in Kenya, where her most famous novel, *Out of Africa* (1937), was written. It is still possible to visit both the farm she lived on in Kenya and her house in Rungsted, Denmark.

Lars von Trier (b. 1956) is the most respected contemporary Danish director, known internationally for such films as *The Kingdom* (1994), *Breaking the Waves* (1996) and *Dancer in the Dark* (2000). *Dancer in the Dark* is a musical starring the Icelandic pop singer Björk. The film won the Palme d'Or and the top acting prize for its star at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival.

Victor Borge (1909-2000) could very well be the most famous Danish-American ever. Originally, Borge's family emigrated from Russia to Denmark, where he learned to play the piano and studied music for several years. Then, in 1940, he fled to the U.S. from German-occupied Denmark and became an American citizen in 1948. Performing more than 600 times on Broadway in his one-man musical variety act, Borge earned the nickname "the funniest man in the world."

Helena Christensen (b. 1968), one of the world's leading supermodels for the past 10 years, has appeared on the cover of nearly every top fashion magazine. Recently she began working as an editor for a trendy New York publication, but from time to time she still takes jobs in the fashion world. Christensen makes her home in New York, Monaco, and Copenhagen.

The brothers **Michael** (b. 1964) and **Brian** (b. 1969) **Laudrup** together with **Peter Schmeichel** (b. 1963) are the three most famous soccer players in Denmark. All three have played for several of the most prominent soccer teams in the world and in many years they made the core of the Danish national squad. Today Michael acts as assistant coach for the national squad.



Karen Blixen



Lars von Trier



Victor Borge



Michael Laudrup

9. Greenland

Geography

Greenland is the world's largest island, covering 840,000 square miles. Its southernmost point, Cape Farewell, lies at the same latitude as Oslo (capital of Norway) and Helsinki (capital of Finland). The northern tip, just 450 miles from the North Pole, is the world's northernmost stretch of land. Eighty-five percent of Greenland is covered by an ice cap, which is 2.2 miles thick in some spots.

Climate

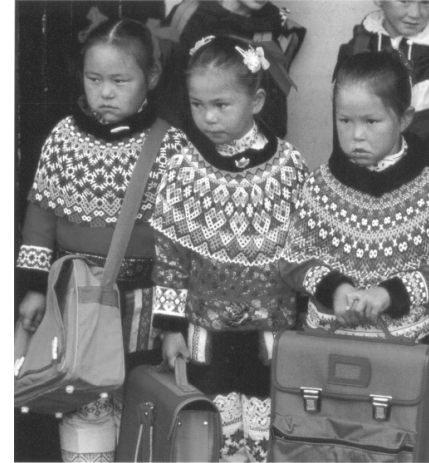
The climate in Greenland is arctic. In the south, summer temperatures average about 47° F, dropping to -15° F in the winter. Traveling north, temperatures average 40° F in summer and -22° F in winter. A large portion of the island is subjected to 24 hours of darkness during winter and midnight sun in the summer. The Northern Lights are another magnificent phenomenon in Greenland. They may take the shape of a curtain fluttering in the wind, or multiple points of light. Though the Northern Lights appear all year round, they can only be observed under a clear, dark nighttime sky.

Population

There are 55,000 people in Greenland, 13,000 of who live in the capital, Nuuk. The indigenous people, the Kalaallit, or Inuit (which means "human being"), account for 85 percent of the population. The remaining 15 percent are mostly of Danish descent. The demands of the Greenlandic Inuit, in contrast to those of many other indigenous peoples around the globe, have largely been met. Recognized as a separate nation with the right to self-determination, the Inuit have political control of their country, enabling them to protect and develop their culture.

Language

Greenlandic is an East Eskimo language similar to those spoken by the Inuit in Canada and Alaska. Greenland's schools teach Danish alongside Greenlandic, and both tongues are used in official situations.



On the first day of school, the children of Greenland wear the national costume.

Flora and Fauna

Greenland's ecosystem is influenced by its arctic climate: low temperatures, low humidity, long dark winters, short summers, and permafrost. Plant growth is inhibited by the cold climate and limited rainfall. Low temperatures and a scarce food supply combine to limit the growth of the animal population. Wildlife has always served as the basis for human existence in Greenland. The island has about 210 species of birds and 125 species of fish. The most important land mammals are the reindeer and the musk ox (the polar bear is a sea mammal). Walrus and various species of seals and whales are also of great importance to the Inuit diet. Finally, there is the sled dog, which is still indispensable for transport. By the way, the world's largest nature reserve (over 375,000 square miles) was established in northern Greenland in 1974.

Early History

The first Inuit immigrants came to Greenland about 5,000 years ago. During the Viking age, people from northern Europe began moving west within the North Atlantic region, and in 985 Erik the Red from Iceland started a settlement on Greenland. In 1721, the Danish-Norwegian priest Hans Egede went to the island to convert the Norse population and establish trading posts. Discovering the Norse community had died out around 1500, he decided to christen the Inuit instead. The establishment of trading posts led to a flourishing of cultural and political life that continued throughout the 19th century. During this period, colleges were set up, the world's first newspaper by and for indigenous people began publishing, and a form of local administration run by officials and a respected sealer from each district was introduced.

Home Rule

In 1952, Greenland established a national council and became an integral part of Denmark with two seats in the Danish Folketing. In 1979, the Home Rule Act took effect and the Siumut Party won a majority in the Greenlandic parliament, called the Landsting. Siumut has been the majority party ever since, and as such also runs the government. With the exception of foreign policy, defense, and monetary policy, all official powers were transferred from Denmark to Greenland during the first 15 years of home rule. Greenland withdrew from the European Community (now the European Union) following a referendum in 1982.



A shrimp trawler in Disco Bay. Shrimp are Greenland's biggest export product.

10. The Faroe Islands

Geography

The Faroe Islands or *Føroya*, as they are called locally are situated in the North Atlantic, equidistant from Norway, Iceland, and Scotland. The Faroes consist of 18 islands separated by narrow sounds and fjords, and cover an area of 545 square miles. The nearest foreign coast is the Shetland Islands, 188 miles away. The smallest island, Lítla Dímun, is nothing more than a rock peeking out of the ocean, while the largest, Streymoy, covers 145 square miles and is the home of the capital, Tórshavn. There are 44,000 people in the Faroe Islands.

The Faroe Islands are formed from volcanic rock, with a surface of mainly cultivated grass. Apart from 3.5 million birds, the most popular one being the puffin, the Faroese share their green islands with 80,000 sheep, which graze on the mountainsides. *Føroya* actually means, "land of sheep" and Faroese sheep are free-range animals in the true sense of the word. In some parts of the islands that are difficult to access, they come into contact with humans only twice in their life: once when they are let loose as lambs, and again when they are herded together as full-grown adults. An old Faroese saying has it that the sheep are a wandering barometer: They come down from the mountains to the sea when cool weather is coming, and return to the mountains when warmer weather is on the way.

The climate in the Faroe Islands is distinctly oceanic, with predominately cool summers and mild winters, as the Gulf Stream keeps the waters ice-free. In autumn, and especially winter, there is plenty of rain and strong winds. This led to several hurricanes in the 1990s.

History and Politics

Vikings, who may have driven away an earlier colony of Irish monks, settled the Faroe Islands in the early ninth century. In the eleventh century the Faroes became a Norwegian fiefdom and Christianity was introduced. Denmark and Norway

were united in 1380, and the Faroes came under Danish rule. When Denmark and Norway parted ways again, the Faroes remained part of the Kingdom of Denmark.

In 1948, the Faroe Islands became self-governing under the Home Rule Act. This means they are an autonomous community within the Kingdom of Denmark, with their own flag and with Faroese as their official language. In addition to having their own government, the people of the Faroes have two elected representatives in the Danish Folketing.



Shearing sheep. Some of the wool is used to produce handmade sweaters.

Language

The Faroese language, more than a millennium old, has its roots in the Old Norse tongue of the Viking age. Faroese has been kept alive by the oral tradition, through stories and ballads sung to accompany the traditional Faroese ring dance. In the middle of the 19th century, a new Faroese written language was created, and after decades of political strife with Denmark it was finally approved as the language of instruction in schools (1937) and as a legal language (1948). In

1993, 104 books were published in Faroese, 57 written originally in Faroese and 47 in translation.

There are six newspapers published in the local tongue, and Faroese Radio (founded in 1957) uses Faroese only. Much of the programming broadcast by Faroese Television (established in 1984) is also in Faroese.

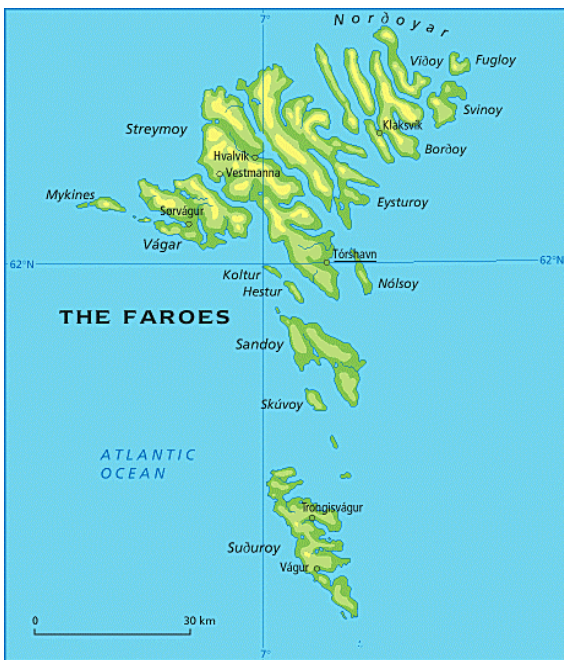
Faroese Culture

The transition from isolated rural society to modern technological welfare state took only two generations on the Faroe Islands. Still, life there is deeply connected to nature, and cultural traditions manage to survive in the small communities. The location and size of the islands is both their biggest limitation and their biggest challenge for the future.



Birds are still hunted the traditional way on the island of Mykines.

11. Maps



Royal Danish Consulate General
Printed in New York, 2000