

Denmark

Understanding World Cultures

Osher course, February 2024

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Travel Plan



Europe



Denmark's location in Europe

DENMARK



Map of Denmark

Photo Album



Rådhuspladsen, København

Photo Album



Nyhavn, København

Photo Album



Odense, hometown of Hans Christian Andersen

Photo Album



Part of Tivoli Gardens, København

Photo Album

Den Gamle By,
Århus



Photo Album



Pigs, Århus

Far more pigs than people.
Highly efficient industry.
No antibiotics.

Photo Album



Seacoast, Jylland

Photo Album



Jylland landscape with wind farm

Photo Album



Sommerhuset

Photo Album



Legoland, Billund

Economic culture

- The state provides cradle-to-grave security.
 - The standard of living is high.
 - There is no poverty and little conspicuous wealth.



Typical Danish home

Economic culture

- The catch...
 - Taxes include 56% income tax plus 25% VAT.
 - High license tax on automobiles.
 - 25% of car value up to ~\$10,000
 - 85% up to ~\$30,000
 - 150% above ~\$30,000



First rate cycling infrastructure

Economic culture

- Unemployment benefits are generous.
 - Unemployed move to Copenhagen
 - Current rate 2.6%-5.0% (depending on source)



Economic culture

- Danes partly rely on a protective and organized state for a sense of security.
 - Friendship less important.
 - Families weak.
 - Partners often don't marry.
 - Kids in child care, parents in retirement homes.



Day care center, Copenhagen

Economic culture

- Denmark does not rely on the engineering approach of the Germans, but:
 - Much thought invested in efficient design. Neat and orderly.



Economic culture

- Efficient utilities, transportation, etc.
- A highly rationalized and protective state provides security.



Economic culture

- There is a strong sense of equality (low power distance).
 - Secretaries get office windows.
 - Relatively small salary range.
 - Sanitation worker is a prized occupation because of high salary.



Economic culture

- People do not abuse the system because:
 - There is a sense of enfranchisement; people feel that they are part of the system rather than working for it.
 - The extremely homogeneous population shares values.



Happiest people in the world thru 2016 (*World Happiness Report*)
Now no. 2, behind Finland

Economic culture

- Danes are uneasy about immigrants.
 - Tourists are welcome, but not foreign residents.
 - Admit refugees in special cases, but constantly talk about the immigrant “problem.”



Politics

- The royal family is analogous to the British monarchy.
 - The Parliament (*Folketing*) makes the laws.
- English is widely spoken.



Queen Margarethe
Abdicated 14 Jan 2024



King Frederik X

Cultural background

- Danes are private and shy around strangers, particularly foreigners.
 - One does not speak to strangers on the street except for utilitarian purposes.
 - It is OK to ask the time of day: *Hvad er klokken?*
 - Do not ask about family or personal matters, illness, etc.

Cultural background

- There is a Celtic/Nordic sense of fun (*sjov*), adventure (*eventyr*), and make believe
 - Amusement parks are popular.
 - Lego toys (from *legetøj*).
 - *Nisser* (elves).



Cultural background

- The society is monochronic but there is little time pressure.
 - No one hurries.
 - Working hours are short.
 - No one works overtime or takes work home.
 - No salvation through work, as in USA.

Cultural background

- Culture is “feminine.”
 - There is a preference for cooperation rather than competition.
 - No hard sells or buzz words.

Århus Handelshøjskolen



Photo Album

- Tendency in “low countries” to isolate undesirable elements of society
 - Dutch: *apartheid*



Christiana,
København

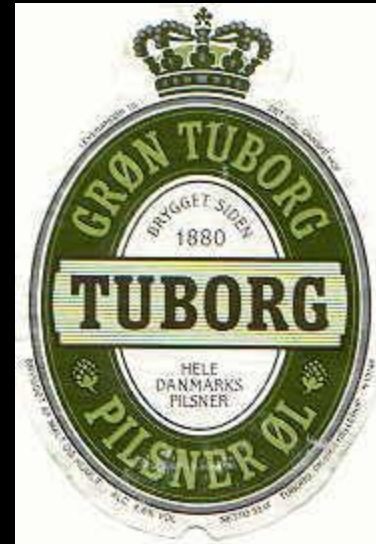
Cultural background

- There is little crime and violence (but there are biker gangs).
 - Isolated in biker compounds



Cultural background

- Alcoholism is a problem.
 - Long, dark winters and secure, orderly environment are boring.



Cultural background

- Language is earthy.
 - No distinction of polite and vulgar language.
- No trace of Puritanism.
 - Explicit magazines and newspapers, nude beaches, etc.

Cultural background

- Danes are secular (despite a large number of state-supported pastors).
 - Cultural solidarity and patriotism serve some functions of religion.
 - Danes invented the concept of a national flag (*Dannebrog*).



Cultural background

- Bicycles rule the land.
 - Danes see themselves as environmentalists



Cultural background

- Sports enthusiasts, especially *fodbål* (soccer)
 - participatory, not spectator sports.



Cultural background

- Stress management techniques include:
 - careful design
 - neatness and order
 - protective state
 - homogeneous population
 - avoidance of time pressure
 - fun.

Social life

- Most business entertaining, when it happens, is in restaurants.
 - *Skål* means “cheers.”
 - Friends entertained at home.



Social Life

- A visit to a private home is possible.
 - Your host will want to show you the entire house.
 - Due to their privacy ethic, Danes are nosy.
- Courtesy is not part of the culture.
 - Obedience to rules is.



Some Phrases

- *Godt nok* - OK
- *Det er deilig (dårlig)* - That's nice (nasty)
- *Tak, tak for det* - Thanks
- *Versåvenlig* - Please (rarely used)
- *Held og lykke* - Good luck
- *Ikke os'* - Right?



Scandinavia

Other Scandinavian Countries

- Similar with respect to protective welfare state, neat and orderly existence, efficient design.
 - Less easygoing and fun-loving than Danes.
 - Sense of superiority.



Norway (*Norge*)

Norwegian *fjord*



Norway

Bergen



Norway

- Dominant Norwegian language (*Bokmål*) is very similar to Danish.
 - But don't mention this; it is a sensitive issue.
 - Some Norwegians also speak *Nynorsk*, which is similar to Swedish.

Norway

- Norwegians can be very reclusive.
- Prices are very high, business hours short.



Sweden (*Sverige*)



Stockholm

Sweden

- Sweden relies heavily on state regulation
 - DUI, idling auto.
 - Also self-regulation: e.g., lax Covid rules
- Highly developed medical establishment.
- Standard setter
 - e.g., Nobel Prizes



Volvo – built
for safety

Iceland (*Island*)



Reykjavik

Iceland

- Very insular.
 - The language is carefully protected from foreign influence.
 - Foreigners instantly spotted.
 - Common view: harsh climate evolved a superior breed of people.
 - Financial crisis – deregulation 2001, overvaluation of krona led to currency bubble.

Finland (*Suomi*)



Helsinki

Finland

- Admitted to Scandinavian club as a matter of courtesy.
 - Related to Uralic people of Russia and Magyars of Hungary.
 - Language is not Indo-European.
 - Impressive gains in education.
 - World's happiest country

Estonia (*Eesti*)

- Estonia has a culture and language similar to those of Finland.



Talinn

The Sámi

- The Sámi are native to the tundra in the northern reaches of Scandinavia and Russia.
 - *Tundra* is a Sámi word.
 - Sámi reject the designations “Lapp” and “Lapland.”



The Sámi

- Sámi and Scandinavians conflict over land rights, etc.
 - Similar to “first nation” peoples elsewhere.
 - Many Sámi have migrated to urban areas.



Traditional dress