

## Visiting Copenhagen and Northern Zealand

Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark. It's small and hyggelig ("hoo-gee" meaning cozy) but quite expensive. The Danish mainland is called Jutland but that is 3 or 4 hours away, because Copenhagen is on the large island called Zealand. The Øresund is the straight that divides Zealand and southern Sweden, there is a bridge that connects Copenhagen and Malmo and a ferry that connects Helsingør and Helsingborg. For Shakespeare fans, "Hamlet's Castle" is at Helsingør. So whilst in Copenhagen be sure to explore the city but also northern Zealand and consider a trip to Sweden. The bad news: There's construction work everywhere just now, so be prepared to dodge scaffolding. Kongens Nytorv (King's Square) in particular is not what it should be.

### Getting to know the city

Take a Canal cruise and then hire a bike! It's that simple. The cruise is much better than the bus trip. You can cycle from one end of the city to the other in 20 mins. Looking at the map there are two smaller canals penetrating into the city centre. The straight one is Nyhavn and the U shaped one is Holmens Canal. Cruises leave from both of these. Nyhavn is a "must see" but also a tourist trap. No need for me to tell you what you'll see, the cruise is guided.

### Public Transport

Copenhagen and Zealand are very well served by buses and trains, and the metro runs from the airport through to the north of the city, so if you are flying, use the metro. The different services are interconnected and share the same ticket. If you expect to do more than one or two trips and especially if there are two of you, buy a 10 trip klipkort from the machine on the metro platform. They cover different number of zones, and for 2 of you, get a 2 zone klipkort. You can share it. The airport journey is a 3 zone journey, but around town it is just 2 (don't ask what happened to 1!). For your first journey from the airport clip the card (look out for the yellow machines on platforms and inside buses) 3 times for 2 of you, which is the equivalent of 2 x 3 zones. Then around town its 2 clips for the two of you. Leaving the airport you can take any metro train, usually either to Kongens Nytorv (city centre) or Nørreport (change to trains). Going back to the airport on the metro you need to choose a "Lufthavn" train. If you are confident and smart phone savvy, use the Rejseplanen app to find your way around. It's available in English and quite easy to follow.

### Sunday tips

If your first day is a Sunday, be aware that some smaller city centre shops and most out of town shops will be closed. Not a problem, you can always find somewhere that is open. For art fans the "Sunday must-do" is a trip to Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, one of the two main art galleries. It's a beautiful building even if you don't like art and it's free on Sundays. Close to Radhuspladsen (town hall square) and Tivoli so easy to find.

### Streets and Squares

Streets are usually "vej" or "gade" and squares are "torv". Having said that, the main shopping street is Strøget, which literally means the stroll, and runs from Kongens Nytorv to Radhuspladsen. The Kongens Nytorv end is smart designer shops, the other end is tourist tacky. Check out Amagertorv (the liveliest square, also called Højbro Plads), Gråbrødretorv (nice cafes), Strådet (parallel to Strøget and full of small local shops and more cafes) and Købmagergade (more shops), but maybe don't bother with Gammel Torv/Nytorv (old square, new square, next to each other).

## **Eating out**

Nyhavn has loads of restaurants and is a must see, but its best strolled through without stopping, too touristy. As well as the cafe areas mentioned above, make for the "Danish quarter" around Ny Østergade (Kongens Nytorv end of Strøget) and the Latin Quarter around Studiestræde at the other end of Strøget (Copenhagen is Gay-friendly, centered on this area). Our favorites include Dan Turrel (brilliant burgers), Cafe Victor (bit more pricey), Cafe G (nice outdoor tables), Flottenheimer (really friendly staff), Cafe Kys (good all rounder), L'Education Nationale (French bistro) and Halifax (great burgers again, but small and popular so often full). Actually it's hard to go wrong! Best coffee? Probably The Living Room on Studiestræde

## **The Bros, Bergs and Havns**

So far we have been in central København (Kbh K) so now let's go further afield. Your bike comes into its own now, but keep it; you'll need it when we explore Zealand later! "Bro" is borough, or neighbourhood, "berg" is hill which why there is only one! Havn is harbour. To the south crossing the canal you are in Christianshavn, where the canal cruise went. Nice area, mixture of genteel and trendy, and of course Christiania. Whatever your attitude to alternative societies it is a must see, and however nervous you feel you're actually totally safe, as in most parts of Copenhagen. The central part of Christiania is called Pusher Alley, and the kids growing up in this sixties-style community are now taught in mainstream schools because they complained so much about their teachers being constantly high. So probably I don't need to say more! On the subject of safety, Central Station (København Hovedbanegård) and Nørreport Station are where the pickpockets are, so take care here. To the North of Kbh K are the 5 lakes which are a great landmark as you cycle around and reading from left to right (west to east) the areas of Vesterbro, Frederiksberg, Nørrebro and Østerbro. Long story short: Vesterbro and Nørrebro are the young and trendy, Nørrebro being the most ethnic. Frederiksberg and Østerbro are more genteel, but still definitely worth exploring. For eating out in Vesterbro head for the meat packing area (go at night, dead during the day) and the area around Det Ny Teater, in Nørrebro look for Pussy Galores in the main square and the area around Nørrebro Bryghus, in Østerbro try Den Franske Cafe, Halifax again (this one is big and you can always get in) and the twins: Pixie and Café Bopa. On a warm evening these two are perfect, lovely lively square, French pétanque, reasonable prices. In Østerbro the Fælledparken is a large public park and you can see Parken, the national stadium, but actually the nicer park is in Frederiksberg. The zoo (a good one), Carlsberg brewery and the Conference campus are all close to Frederiksberg Gardens. In the gardens late afternoon look out for the guy who feeds the storks! Fiasco in Frederiksberg is our favorite upmarket restaurant, Italian with a Danish twist. Food actually very reasonably priced, but the maitre'd is brilliant at talking you into extra drink!

## **Flots, Borgs and Kunst**

"Flots" and "Borgs" are castles, Kunst is art and history. In town, be sure to visit Amalienborg, home of the Queen and also Crown Prince, and Rosenborg, in the Kings gardens and home of the crown jewels. Amalienborg is on the waterfront and you can cycle from here towards Østerbro to see Kastellet (the old fortifications) and Little Mermaid. It is little! Christiansborg is the Parliament, close to city centre, and now offers the best aerial view of the city. Frederiksberg Slot next to the zoo looks impressive from the gardens but is actually a boring barracks. Soon we will go out of town altogether, taking our bike with us on the S trains, so now is the time to mention that every Danish king for centuries has been Frederik or Christian, so these names crop up all the time and cause massive confusion; Frederiksberg Slot is not the barracks in Frb, in fact it's not in Copenhagen. We'll see it later, but before we leave the city, visit the National Museum

(close to Ny Carlsberg Glyptoket) and Statens Museum for Kunst (art gallery, near to Kings Gardens). Free entry to both. Whether you go to Tivoli or not depends on your liking for all things Disney but on a small scale; it's wonderful at Christmas but maybe not a must other times of year. There are also really good art galleries at Arken (south of the city), Ørdrupgaard (northern suburb) and, for modern art, Louisiana (see below).

### **Northern Zealand/Sweden**

In town you used your bike, now the rules change! You use your bike, but you take it on the train! There are lots of possibilities, but here are 4 easy options, all starting at Central Station, Nørreport Station or Østerport Station:

Hillerød: take an S train line E northwards to the end of the line, Hillerød. Explore Frederiksborg Castle, possibly the most beautiful castle in Denmark and home to a large museum of Danish history and art. To make a full day of it, take the Lokalebanelen from Hillerød to Helsingør and continue as below.

Helsingør: take the Øresund train northwards to the end of the line, Helsingør. Explore Kronborg Castle. To turn it into a full day, take the train back down the coast stopping at Humlebæk, then cycle north through the village to find Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

Klampenborg and Dyrehave: for a half day, take the S train line C to the end of the line, Klampenborg. Head east to the beach or west into Dyrehave (literally animal garden but translated as Deer Park). Visit Bakken, the down-market version of Tivoli.

Sweden: If you must! Two options: Øresundstog south to Malmö over the bridge (yes, THAT bridge if you have seen the Nordic Noir thriller), or north to Helsingør then ferry to Helsingborg. Malmö is bigger, Helsingborg is cuter!