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# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' SURVIVAL GUIDE

*to life in Denmark*





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# WELCOME TO DENMARK

**WELCOME!** You have decided to study in Denmark, and for that we salute you. We hope that you will enjoy your stay. We know that acclimatizing to a new country and a new city can be complicated – and we know that the Danes can be a little weird at times, so this book will give you tips, insights and background information on how to experience the best possible student life in Denmark.

In each chapter you will find useful information, tips and tricks, fun (and not so fun) facts about Denmark, and a variety of links and places to get even more information.

This book is a guide to many different aspects of Danish student life. It is not comprehensible, but we have tried to cover as much ground as possible. We will give you tips, information and where-to-go places, but we will not be able to solve every problem that you have.

What we hope this book can do, is to give you the tools and knowledge to solve your problems on your own.



We believe that this will bring you further than any quick fixes could otherwise do.

If you have any questions during your stay here, and don't know where to go; our best tip is simple: Ask a Dane! Approach one of your Danish classmates and ask them how they find their way around your university's intranet, how they navigate the Nem-ID-system, or where they bought their bike. They know these things better than any book ever could, and the best cultural knowledge is gained through meeting people – so ask for information and help when needed!

Before you plan your trip to Denmark, remember to check whether your new university offers pre-semester introduction activities and language classes. If they do, we recommend that you plan to participate in those, as these will give you the best possible start to your stay here.

*We hope that you will have fun, learn a lot and enjoy your experiences as a student in Denmark.*



**For more information about studying at Danish Universities, click below:**

[www.Studycph.dk](http://www.Studycph.dk)

[www.studyindenmark.dk](http://www.studyindenmark.dk)

## Language Courses for Free

The majority of universities in Denmark have Danish language courses for international students either pre-semester or in the beginning of the semester. Check

with your local international office when you arrive if it's not mentioned in your admittance package.

If you would like to continue studying Danish, there are numerous pri-

vate and public centres offering free language courses for internationals. You just need to have a CPR number to sign up. (So that is one more reason to get it done in a hurry...)

**READ MORE HERE:**

[www.dedanskesprogcentre.dk/en/forside](http://www.dedanskesprogcentre.dk/en/forside)

[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/learning-danish](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/learning-danish)



## CULTURE ADJUSTMENT

**ARRIVING IN A NEW COUNTRY** can result in both practical and personal issues. Some people even talk about experiencing an actual “culture shock”. Here are some tips on how to make your first time in a new culture easier and more enjoyable.

Although Denmark is a well-organised country and people here are eager to make you feel comfortable, you will need some time to settle in. There may be times when you question why you left home, which is likely similar to what your fellow students are feeling and questioning.

When this happens, it is important for you to remember that you are going through a learning process. By accepting this brief adjustment period as a learning experience, you will ultimately be returning home with greater self-confidence and the skillset to succeed in a multicultural environment.

So keep active, engage in social opportunities, talk to people and try to learn Danish.

Remember: you are not alone in experiencing these feelings. Talking about your feelings and worries is the best way to deal with loneliness or homesickness.

Tip!

### Here are some tips on easing yourself into a new culture from Study in Denmark ([www.studyindenmark.dk](http://www.studyindenmark.dk))

- › Accept that you cannot know everything about your new country and language
- › Keep an open mind
- › Try to do things that you did at home
- › Stay in touch with family and friends at home
- › Talk to other students about how you feel
- › Stay active



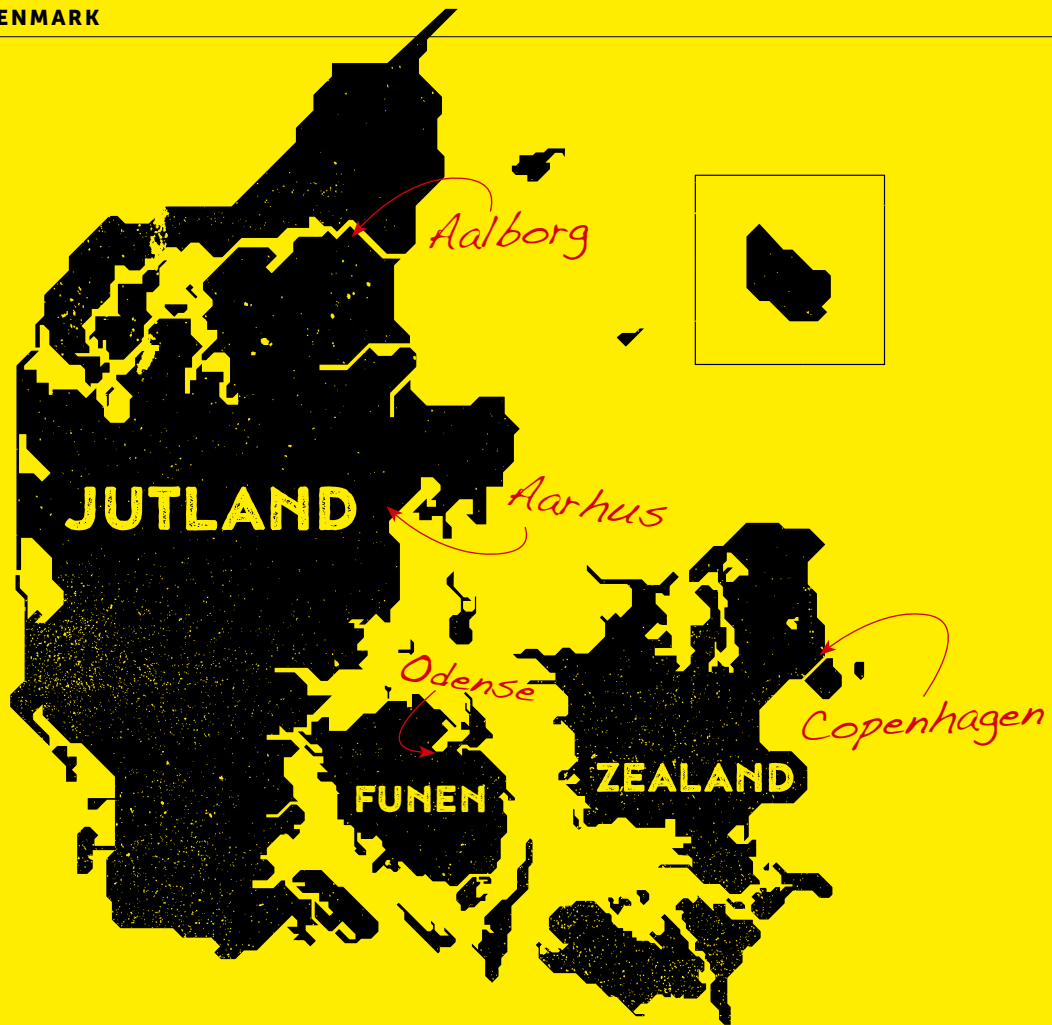
**You're not alone!**

*(Even if you feel like it.)*

Moving to a new city can be tough. Moving to a different country and culture altogether can be even tougher.

According to a 2011 survey, 25% of the international students in Denmark experienced loneliness during their stay. However, this is not solely a problem for international students – similar surveys amongst Danish students show that up to 23% of them also feel lonely at university.

Students' loneliness may be caused by the fragmented university structure and the lack of centrally located social activities. If you want to counter this, there are many ways to get involved both at your university and in your city, and through the local Student House (Studenterhuset).



# DENMARK AT A GLANCE!

**DENMARK.** The home of Hans Christian Andersen, Tivoli, Lego, beer, pastries and hygge.

On the surface it's hard not to see Denmark as a tiny cute country, mostly known for its fairytales and tourist attractions... unless you arrive in January. Then you'll probably notice the grey, rainy and cold weather, and the crazy Danes who will bike to class regardless of the snowstorms and fog.

Denmark is a lot of things, and we hope that you will discover a great deal of those things during your stay here.

## Geography

Denmark consists of the Jutland peninsula and 443 named islands, linking Northern Europe and Scandinavia via the Øresund bridge. Copenhagen, the country's capital, is situated on the biggest island in Denmark, called Zealand. You can find Funen, a slightly smaller island, between Zealand and Jutland.

The big university cities are Aalborg and Aarhus in Jutland, Odense on Funen and the Greater Copenhagen area (including Roskilde and Lyngby) on Zealand.

## Danish demography

Denmark has a population of a little over 5,5 million people. Copenhagen is the biggest city with 1,2 million inhabitants, followed by Aarhus (approx. 240.000 inhabitants), Odense (approx. 170.000) and Aalborg (125.000).

Most of Denmark's population can be described as middle class, and there is little divide between most people's living conditions, compared to other western countries.

Around 85% of the Danish population is considered "of Danish descent", meaning that they have one or two Danish parents. The remaining 15% of the population is a mix of Western and Non-Western immigrants, guest workers and refugees.

It is mandatory that all Danish kids receive at least 9 years of education, normally until the age of 15 or 16, resulting in a 99% literacy rate in Denmark.

Government-funded education is free of charge and open to all. 60% of all Danes between the ages of 15 and 69 have a higher-level education.

# Climate

**DENMARK IS PLACED** in the temperate zone, and has a coastal climate, resulting in generally cooler or mild temperature that rarely becomes either too cold or too warm.

Winters rarely get much colder than -10 to 0 degrees.

The weather tends to be mixed throughout the year in terms of sun, wind and rain, but be prepared for wonderful sunny, rainy, and grey days, and then those days where it simply feels like you're about to get blown away by a storm. Get wellies, a big scarf and a raincoat, and remember that layers are the way to go all year round.

Due to Denmark's geographical placement, which is quite north, we have short days in the winter (from 9-16 around winter solstice) and long days and bright nights in the summer (from 4.30 - 22 around summer solstice). This results in a lot of indoor cosiness (hygge) in the winter and outdoor fun in the summer.

Outdoor life is an important part of enjoying life in Denmark, even if it's just biking through the city on your way to university – so be prepared for that. Get a bike, and pack some warm clothes that will enable you to go outside and enjoy yourself regardless of the weather.

If you don't have winter or autumn clothes with you, several shops such as H&M etc. have plenty of affordable options.



## Religion

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM** is a constitutional right in Denmark. The country's official state religion is Christianity, in the form of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark (Dansk Folkekirke).

In this respect Denmark is a non-secular state; however, atheism and most religions are represented within Danish society, and religion is rarely mentioned in political or state matters. The second largest religion here is Islam, which has witnessed an increase since the 1980s as a result of immigration. There are Jewish, Muslim, Hinduistic, Buddhistic and different Christian congregations in the bigger cities, so contact them, if you are interested in getting involved.

Most Danes see themselves as secular in their daily lives, and church attendance is generally low. Religion plays little role in most people's life choices, and it can actually be seen as a social faux pas to discuss religion at length with people you don't know very well. Most Danes prefer to keep their religious preferences private, so maybe don't bring it up as the first topic when meeting new people.







# TRANSPORTATION AND GETTING AROUND TOWN

**WITHIN THE CITIES**, biking, walking, and taking public transportation are more than enough to get you around town.

Bikes can be quite cheap, often the fastest solution (no waiting for the bus), and most Danes will bike regardless of rain or snow. If you have only just learned how to ride a bike upon coming to Denmark, do be careful so that you don't hurt yourself. In some Danish cities, Red Cross occasionally organises "bike schools" for foreigners who would like to learn.

If you can bike, find an affordable, but reliable one (ask your classmates where they bought theirs) and remember to be safe while using it.

You should always, always use the bike lane when possible. If not, stick to the right side of the road, as close to the curb as is safely possible.

Signal with your arm when you turn and when you stop, stop for red lights and stay in the bike lane or as far right on the road as is feasible. Remember to get lights for your bike (white for the front, red for the

back) to use at night, and to not bike on sidewalks or through pedestrian crossings.

It is not mandatory to wear a helmet in Denmark, but keep your brain safe and get a proper one that fits you and have the CE certificate (a sticker inside the helmet with CE, stating that it's approved.). It can save your life.

For safety reasons, we recommend that you do not listen to loud music or use your mobile phone while biking.

In the bigger cities, busses, metros and local trains are all good reliable options for transportation. Across Denmark, there are trains, ferries, and coach services that you can take. There are train lines that run between the different regions.

You must have a valid ticket or commuter card when using public transportation, as the fines for riding without one are high in all cities.

Outside the cities people often travel by cars, and most families have at least one. It is rather expensive to own a car in Denmark, due to high car taxes, high gasoline prices and high insurance costs, so few students own cars.

# THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN YOUR UNIVERSITY CITY

## AALBORG

**CARNIVAL** On May 28th of each year, Aalborg turns up the heat, music and the colours for the biggest carnival in Northern Europe. There are 60.000 parade participants in extraordinary costumes and over 100.000 cheering spectators.

**JOMFRU ANE GADE** Also known as “Gaden” (The street). Gaden is probably the most famous and notorious party street in Denmark, and the street in Scandinavia with the most restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs in one place. Bring your friends.

**THE SINGING TREES** Park in central Aalborg, where a wide array of international music stars have each planted a tree – and where the trees “play” musical creation by the various artists at the push of a button.

**UTZON CENTER** Centre design, architecture and art, where you can gain inspiration and knowledge. Designed by the famous Danish architect Jørn Utzon, the centre is considered to be a piece of art in itself.

**SKAGEN** The North-most point of Denmark, with spectacular nature, a sand-buried church, and the possibility of standing with a foot in two different seas that meet at the tip of Skagen. Go for mid-summer if possible, but it’s great all year round.

[www.visitaalborg.com](http://www.visitaalborg.com)



## COPENHAGEN

**TIVOLI OR BAKKEN** The two oldest operating amusement parks in the world - what’s not to like? Many of the old rides are still in function and the atmosphere in both parks is magical..

**SUMMER BARBECUES IN THE PARKS** Bring a disposable grill, good food, some wine/beer/soda and maybe even a ball to kick around. There are no laws against open containers or consuming alcohol outside in Denmark. This is how Danish students celebrate summer.

**ROSKILDE FESTIVAL** This is the biggest musical festival in Scandinavia, just 30 minutes from Copenhagen. It’s a staple in many Copenhagen students’ lives and lot of people go there for the full 10 days, setting up camps with their friends and “checking out of” everyday life so as to immerse themselves in the art and the music.

**BOAT TRIP IN THE HARBOUR** The harbour boats run all year long and are a great way to see Copenhagen from the water. In the summer the boats are a breezy break from the city’s heat, and in the winter, you get to have outdoor adventure, but under a roof that shields you from the rain.

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FESTIVALS** From CPH:DOX’s documentary celebration to Distortion’s massive block parties, there’s a festival for you in Copenhagen no matter what you’re into.

[www.visitcopenhagen.com](http://www.visitcopenhagen.com)



## Dress like a Dane:

Most Danish students dress in a style that lands between casual and very fashion forward. There’s no tradition for formal dress codes, so suits, ties and high heels are optional (if you want to rock it, go you!) and most people dress for a

certain level of comfort and practicality, as most students use bikes to get around. However, Danish students still manage to look stylish while doing so. Think jeans – not track pants; casual does not mean sloppy here.

## ODENSE

**HC ANDERSEN'S HOUSE** The famous Danish fairy-tale writer grew up in Odense, and there are plenty of subtle references to his stories throughout the city.

**BRANDTS** Museum of Art and Visual Culture – The central city art centre and museum is a great place for everyone who is interested in art, photography and culture.

**WAREHOUSE FESTIVAL** Independent festival for electronic music that gathers genre enthusiasts and party people for a two-day melting pot of beats, bits and big pop hits by the harbour in Odense.

**URBAN ART AROUND THE HARBOUR AND CITY** Odense has several legal graffiti walls around town and some very impressive murals, which can turn an ordinary walk around town into a modern creative experience.

**THE ISLANDS SOUTH OF FUNEN** Take a weekend trip to the small islands south of Funen and Odense. Just a short trip from Odense, one can fish, relax on the beach, and experience a cosy atmosphere and beautiful nature.

[www.visit odense.com](http://www.visit odense.com)

## AARHUS

**AROS** The huge museum of modern art in Aarhus has both permanent and visiting exhibitions. It is famous for Ron Mueck's statue "Boy" and Olafur Eliasson's "Your Rainbow Panorama, from which you can see Aarhus from above, tinted by all of the colours of the rainbow.

**AARHUS FESTUGE** For 10 days in August/September all of Aarhus is bustling with art, theatre, dance, music and too many events to mention in the cultural melting pot that is known as the "Aarhus week of festivities".

**NORTHSIDE** A prominent "city festival" (so no camping) with major international rock and pop acts with an emphasis on sustainability and good food.

**DEN GAMLE BY** How did Denmark look in the past? Den Gamle By ("The Old Town") is a re-enacted, living museum, showing how Danish life looked in the 16th, 17th and 18th century.

**BAZAR VEST** If you venture out to the Western Aarhus suburb Gellerupparken, you will come across the mythical place called Bazar Vest. Here you can find food, spices and groceries from all over the world in the market hall, showcasing the multicultural Aarhus at its finest.

[www.visitaarhus.com](http://www.visitaarhus.com)

## LGBTQ

Denmark legalized same-sex civil marriage in 1989 and same-sex church marriages in 2012. Overall, the majority of people in bigger Danish cities are open-minded, tolerant and inclusive towards the LGBTQ community. Copenhagen, in particular, has a big and diverse social scene. Both Copenhagen and Aarhus host big official pride parades and celebrations, and many smaller cities follow suit.

If you are looking for LGBTQ-friendly venues and events, the "rainbow sticker" system is common, so look for the sticker at the entrance. Info about the community, activities and events can also be found on [www.lgbt.dk](http://www.lgbt.dk) and [www.out-and-about.dk/agenda\\_uk.asp](http://www.out-and-about.dk/agenda_uk.asp)

If you're interested in meeting likeminded students, [www.blus.dk](http://www.blus.dk) is a good place to start.

And yes, we DO wear a lot of black. It is not because we are all goths or coming straight from a funeral, but it does make laundry day a lot simpler.

For a fun perspective on Danish style, this outsider per-



spective is one of the best out there:

[www.copenhannah.com/post/14228929903/how-to-look-like-a-dane](http://www.copenhannah.com/post/14228929903/how-to-look-like-a-dane)



# GETTING STARTED IN DENMARK

**THIS CHAPTER** will give you a brief overview of how to get started when you arrive in Denmark. In general, check up on the links and follow the instructions given to you by the various authorities. This is not a definite checklist, but a way to get most of your bases covered without too much trouble.

Most of this will not be particularly exciting to read about, but it will be a great deal more exciting to study in Denmark when you get these things fixed upon arrival.

Info!

[www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/frontpage.htm](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/frontpage.htm)  
<https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk>

## *First step*

### **Getting a CPR NUMBER**

After arriving in Denmark there are some important things you have to take care of before you can start enjoying your new life here. The most important is to register with the authorities and get your CPR number as soon as possible.

All Danes have a personal Social Security Number called a CPR-number. CPR is an abbreviation for Det Centrale Personregister, translated to: the civil registration service. The CPR-Number is used for almost all of your dealings with Danish authorities, such as the health care system, and is the main information on the national health insurance card (sygesikringkort).

You will need a CPR number to gain access to the authorities' self-service online system, to open a bank account, to buy a phone, get a gym membership and much more.

To get a CPR number, you need to go to your local International Citizen Centre (see addresses for your city at the end of this chapter or find it at [www.icitizen.dk](http://www.icitizen.dk)).

You need to have a place to live with a valid address, and you must have been granted a residence permit or certificate.

If you do not yet have a permanent address, ask the citizen service staff if you are allowed to use your current address, such as that of a hostel, if you plan to stay there long.

If you are in doubt during the process, ask the staff at the local International Citizen Service office to help you. They are there to provide a service, and will normally be very helpful if you ask politely for help with the forms and procedures.

You can also ask your university's international office or your mentor, but bear in mind that they might not know all of the current rules and requirements.

Yes, we know that the "proof of address" can be the biggest hurdle to overcome. This is why we have dedicated an entire chapter to this. See the chapter HOUSING to learn more.

# RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GETTING A CPR NUMBER

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## For EU students

*(including EEA and Swiss citizens)*

### You need:

- › First you need a Residence Certificate.
- › The State County (in Danish 'Statsforvaltningen') will issue your residence certificate.

**Get the Residence certificate by bringing these things to the Regional State Administration office (or International Citizen Service in your city):**

- › Your letter of admission to your university in Denmark
- › Your passport
- › Two colour photocopies of your original passport (photo has to be visible)
- › A photograph that fulfils the passport photo requirements
- › A completed "Application For EU- Residence" form

**The Citizen Service Office (in Danish 'Borgerservice') will issue your CPR number.**

**Bring these things to the International Citizen Service to get it:**

- › Your passport
- › A completed "Arrival From Foreign Countries" form
- › Valid Residence Certification
- › Proof of your address in Denmark (e.g. rental contract)




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## For non-EU students

### You need:

- › Visa: You need to apply for/receive your visa BEFORE your arrival.
- › Residence permit: You need to apply for/receive your residence permit BEFORE your arrival.

**Then bring this to the International Citizen Service to get your CPR number:**

- › Your passport
  - › A completed "Arrival From Foreign Countries" form
  - › Valid Residence Permit
  - › Proof of address for the place you are staying in Denmark (e.g. rental contract)
-

## VISA/residence permit for NON-EU/EAA citizens:

Before coming to Denmark you need to find out whether you need a VISA or a residence permit:

*See which nationalities need a visa to enter Denmark*

If your country of residence requires a visa for you to enter Denmark and you plan to stay here for more than 3 months, you must apply for a residence permit prior to arriving in Denmark.

### Where to file your application:

You can apply for a visa at any authorised Danish mission in your home country. These include the Danish Embassies and certain consulates abroad.

If you need more information about the Danish Immigration rules, visit the website of the Danish Immigration Service. You can also contact the nearest Danish embassy or consulate.

Info!

[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/permits-visas-red-tape/residence-permits-for-non-eu-citizens](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/permits-visas-red-tape/residence-permits-for-non-eu-citizens)

## EU/EEA or Swiss citizens

If you are an EU/EEA or Swiss citizen, you can legally stay in Denmark for up to three months without having a residence permit.

If you want to stay longer, whether it is for school or work, you will need either a registration certificate (for EU/EEA citizens) or a residence card (for Swiss nationals).

Nordic citizens (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland) do not need a visa or registration certificates for living, studying and working in Denmark.

### How to get a registration certificate:

You get both the registration certificate and residence card at the Regional State Administration (Statsforvaltningen) within three months of arriving in Denmark. Remember to bring your passport, two passport photos and your 'Letter of Admission' to your university.

Please remember that it can take up to three weeks to get the permit.

You need the permit in order to be able to get a CPR-number, so get this done early on and everything will be easier. Regional State Administration.

Info!

[www.statsforvaltning.dk/site.aspx?p=6394](http://www.statsforvaltning.dk/site.aspx?p=6394)  
[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/permits-visas-red-tape/useful-steps-when-coming-to-denmark](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/permits-visas-red-tape/useful-steps-when-coming-to-denmark)  
[www.studycph.dk/settling/visa-residency-permit](http://www.studycph.dk/settling/visa-residency-permit)  
[www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming\\_to\\_dk/visa/need\\_visa/who\\_needs\\_visa.htm](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/visa/need_visa/who_needs_visa.htm)

## No Corruptions

Denmark is one of the least corrupt countries in the world according to studies, so everyone has to follow the same rules and regulations to get the papers needed.

This lack of corruption also means that you can generally trust the information given to you by the public servants, as well as the information available on the various public offices' websites.

# OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT IN DENMARK

**IT IS A GOOD IDEA** to open a Danish bank account if you have to study here. If you want to have a job or even get SU, you will definitely need one.

To open a bank account you first need a CPR number, so start by getting that sorted out.

If you are wondering about which bank to choose, it's a good idea to ask your fellow students for recommendations. They will know where the good deals are for students and which banks have great service and good online banking options.

Opening an account is pretty simple. Just bring your passport and national health insurance card to a branch of the bank you wish to open an account with.

You will still have to bring enough money or a credit card for the first few weeks of your stay in Denmark. You might need it for the deposit on your accommodation and other start-up expenses.

Make sure you can use your credit card in Denmark, it will be easiest if you have a card with a chip and a pin-code, as those are the common type here, and check your cash withdrawal limit, so you don't get any annoying surprises.

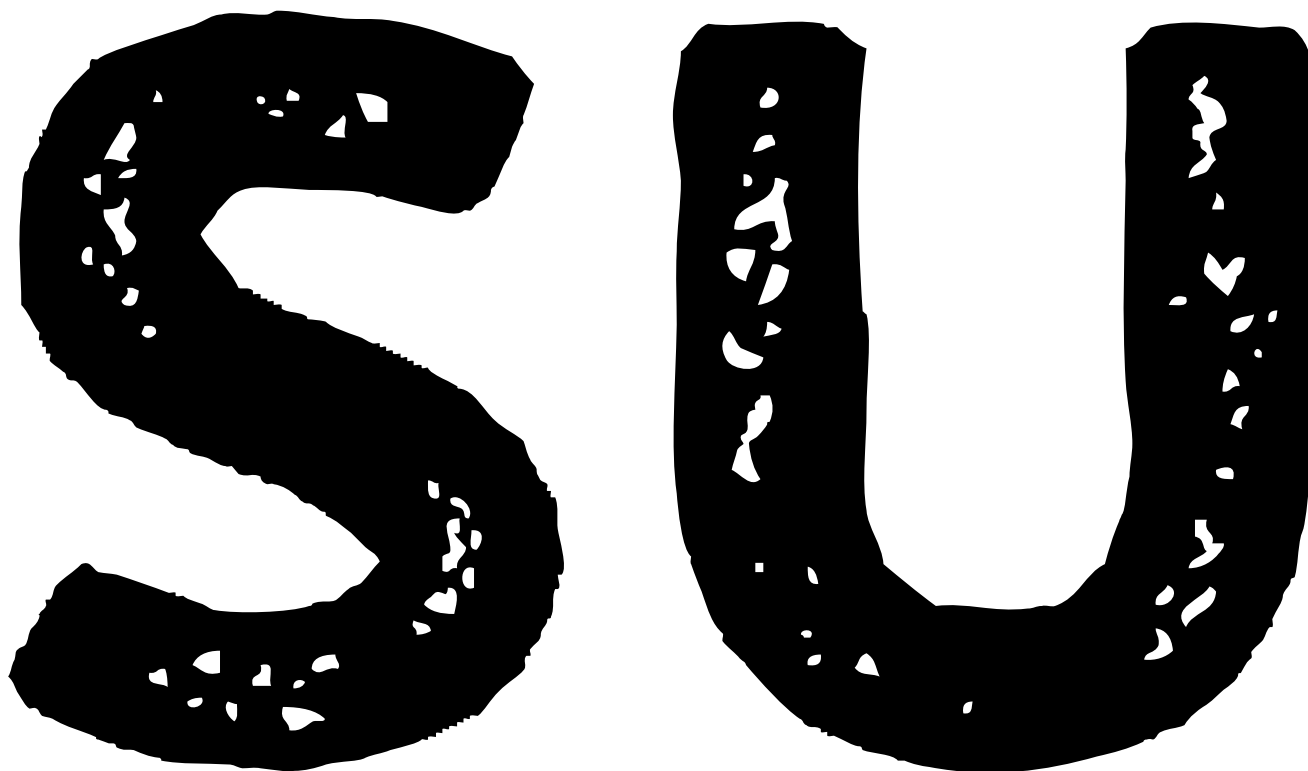
## **"Nemkonto" – the public payment system**

You need to register your Danish bank account with the Danish tax authority as your 'Nemkonto' (translated: 'easy account').

This will make it possible for the public authorities to make direct payments to you – like wages, tax rebates or maintenance payments. It is mandatory for all foreigners with a CPR-number to have a NemKonto, so remember to talk to your bank about it when setting up the account.

Once it has been set up, it can be managed online as well. Follow the link [www.nemkonto.dk/da/ServiceMenu/Engelsk](http://www.nemkonto.dk/da/ServiceMenu/Engelsk)





**SU IS THE DANISH STUDENT'S GRANT.** All Danish students at a recognized university are eligible to receive SU.

It is only possible for EU & Nordic citizens to receive SU.

As an EU or Nordic citizen receiving SU, you are required to fulfil a list of criteria. One requirement, for example, is that you have a paid (legal) job for 10-12 hours per week.

If you fulfil the criteria, you still need to apply for the SU to get it. Go to the SU office at your school or check SU.dk.

If you receive SU, there is a limit to how much you can earn per year while getting the grant. If you earn more than that limit, you have to pay back some of your SU, so plan your working hours accordingly.

### **Eligible for SU**

You are eligible if you are:

- › an EU or EEA citizen
- › work at least 10-12 hours a week
- › are studying at a Danish university for a full degree (that is, not through an exchange programme)

### **Not Eligible for SU**

You are not eligible if you are

- › a non-EU or non-EEA citizen
- › don't have a job of 10-12 hours a week
- › are an exchange student at a Danish university while doing a full degree at your home university

The present SU rate is DKK 5.753 (approximately EUR 750) per month (before tax) for students who do not live with their parents. Extra support is available for those who are also supporting their own children.

Info!

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[www.su.dk/english](http://www.su.dk/english)

[www.studyindenmark.dk/study-options/tuition-fees-scholarships/tuition-fees-and-scholarships](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/study-options/tuition-fees-scholarships/tuition-fees-and-scholarships)

[www.universitypost.dk/article/su-grant-can-you-get-it](http://www.universitypost.dk/article/su-grant-can-you-get-it)

[www.sdu.dk/en/information\\_til/studerende\\_ved\\_sdu/su](http://www.sdu.dk/en/information_til/studerende_ved_sdu/su)

[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/working-in-denmark/student-jobs](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/working-in-denmark/student-jobs)

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Info!

**Read more about getting mobile phone plans here:**[www.forbrugseksperten.dk/english/mobile/exchange-student](http://www.forbrugseksperten.dk/english/mobile/exchange-student)[www.studerende.au.dk/en/internationalstudents/livingindenmark/postphoneinternet](http://www.studerende.au.dk/en/internationalstudents/livingindenmark/postphoneinternet)[www.justlanded.com/english/Denmark/Denmark-Guide/Telephone-Internet/Mobile-phone](http://www.justlanded.com/english/Denmark/Denmark-Guide/Telephone-Internet/Mobile-phone)

# PHONES

**Denmark uses these frequencies for mobile signals:**

GSM/GPRS/EDGE (2G)

UMTS and HSDPA (3G and Turbo 3G)

LTE (4G)

**The frequencies are the same standard as in the rest of Europe:**

GSM/GPRS/EDGE: 900/1800 MHz

UMTS/HSPA+: 900/2100 MHz

LTE: 800/1800/2600 MHz

**NOW YOU HAVE** a CPR number and a bank account, which will make it easier to get practical issues like your phone plan and Internet sorted.

**Mobile phones**

It is very common for Danish university students to use mobile phones in their everyday lives.

Most of the cheapest options will be online-based phone plans, where you pay either a fixed amount per month or pay-as-you-go for the services. The price will depend on how much you talk and how much traffic you want on your phone.

If you come from a European country, your phone will most likely work here. The majority of phones that are sold around the world will also work in Denmark.

**How to get a mobile phone**

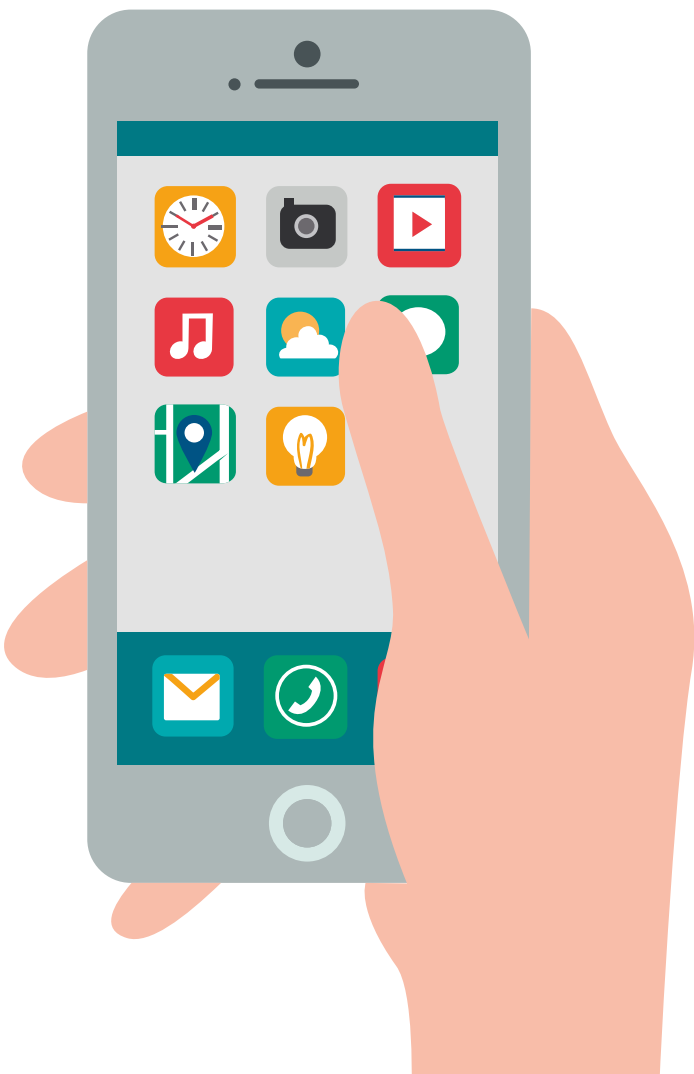
If you need a new phone, most companies will have discounted phone deals when you sign up.

This is a great topic to ask the Danish students from your classes about. Ask them what company they use, and would they recommend it. It is a good idea to ask a local Dane about their phone coverage, especially since their answer will be a lot more honest than that of a phone sales person. Choose according to your needs and budget.

A good tip is to get a plan that comes with affordable international use. Though we would recommend Skype or similar online communication platforms for long distance calls and daily communication with people back home, the mobile plans without an extra roaming fee are useful for when you explore countries outside of Denmark.

If you have to make a lot of international calls, it is also worth looking into the phone companies that specialize in this.

The country calling code for Denmark is +45. Remember this when calling Danish numbers from a non-Danish phone provider or network.





# INTERNET

**MOST UNIVERSITIES,** libraries and residential halls/dorms already have free Internet for students and/or residents. As a student, you will have access to the Eduroam network, if this is provided at your school.

**Read more about Eduroam here:**

[www.eduroam.org/index.php?p=faq](http://www.eduroam.org/index.php?p=faq)

If you need another Wi-Fi option, there are many phone and internet suppliers that sell USB-modems, which are a cheap and portable solution.

If you are living in a private flat without any Internet, talk to your landlord before ordering a cable line. The building might have a deal with a provider, and you don't want to spend more money on this than you should.

If in doubt, the personal USB modem is a cheap and easy solution and you are usually not bound by the contract for a long period of time. You might even be able to get a combined deal when you order your phone plan.

**Read more about good internet solutions here:**

[www.bredbaandsmatch.dk/english/exchange](http://www.bredbaandsmatch.dk/english/exchange)

# TRANSPORTATION



**THE EASIEST WAY** to get around most Danish cities is on bike, by foot or by public transportation. Cars are expensive both to buy, insure, fuel and park in the bigger cities, so consider whether or not you really need one, especially if you're on a budget.

Cabs are expensive, but it is a good idea to have the number of a local reliable taxi-service saved in your phone in the event that you should need it. Ask other students what taxi-service they prefer.

Public transportation functions well in all university cities. If you have a longer commute, you might be eligible for a student commuter card.

Go to your nearest DSB station, bring documentation proving that you are a student (and especially if you get SU) and talk to the DSB officers about the cheapest options for your transportation needs. They are normally very helpful.

**DSB:** [www.dsb.dk/en/](http://www.dsb.dk/en/)

If you use the bus, local trains or metro only on occasion, check how the ticket system works in your city. Is it a digital solution like the Rejsekort? Maybe an app like Movia's in Copenhagen? Or are you required to carry cash around (and do they give change)? It makes it easier to travel everyday when you know the answers to these questions.

If you live on Zealand or Funen, you might also need to figure out the Rejsekort (travel card) system. You sign up for a card, which then functions as a digital ticket, either as a pay-per-travel or a monthly plan. Go to the central station in your new city and ask them whether this is worth considering.

**Read more about it here:** [www.rejsekort.dk/en](http://www.rejsekort.dk/en)

**Check if you live in an area that is using Rejsekort:**  
[www.rejsekort.dk/brug-rejsekort/her-kan-du-bruge-rejsekort](http://www.rejsekort.dk/brug-rejsekort/her-kan-du-bruge-rejsekort)

# EMERGENCY & HEALTHCARE

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

The two phone numbers you need to remember are:

**Emergency** 1 1 2

**Police** 1 1 4

Should you need emergency assistance immediately dial 112. If you need police assistance or have to report something, dial 114.

If you're calling from a Danish network and number, you don't need the +45 to call 112.

### Emergency services

If you have an emergency situation, call 112 for ambulance, police and fire service. The emergency call centre will ask for your name, address and the phone number you are calling from. They will then make sure that the appropriate help is immediately sent.

Do not use this number unless it is an emergency and you need the aforementioned services, cluttering the line prevents a quick response to people in real need.

HOWEVER; IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY: DIAL 112

## Police

Danish culture and everyday life is based on a high degree of mutual trust and tolerance. The crime rates in Denmark are low, but it is of course still wise to use common sense to stay safe and to look after your valuables. The Danish police are normally helpful and service minded, so don't be afraid to contact them if you need to.



Info!

**Find your local police station  
and get more info at**  
[www.politi.dk/en/servicemenu/home](http://www.politi.dk/en/servicemenu/home)

# HEALTHCARE

**THE DANISH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM** ensures universal access for all residents. When you are an international student and a resident in Denmark, you will have access to free medical treatments except for a few things like dental care and physiotherapy.

## Doctors and prescriptions

If you need to see your General Practitioner you should arrange an appointment by telephone. The phone number is on your yellow health card. This can be done a few days in advance or on the same day if your illness requires more immediate attention. Most GPs also offer a consultation service by telephone, often available for about an hour every day.

Your GP will provide you with preventive and general treatment. They can also refer you to a hospital or specialist clinic for further treatment. Your GP is also the doctor you contact to get prescriptions for medication or if you need to renew your existing prescriptions.

Danish prescriptions can be done as a paper-in-hand version or (more often) as a digital registration, that the pharmacies can access through your CPR-number.

*You can only buy prescription medicine at the pharmacies (apotek), not the drugstore (Matas).*

## The Danish National Health Insurance Card

When you register for your CPR number, you will receive a national health insurance card ('Sygesikringskort'). This card is proof that you are entitled to all public healthcare services in Denmark. Remember to bring it with you to all visits to the doctor, hospitals and at the pharmacy when collecting prescription drugs.



The card states your name, address and your Civil Personal Registration (CPR) number as well as the name and address of your general practitioner (in Denmark referred to as "family doctor").

**Info!**

**Read more about the Danish Healthcare system and coverage here:**

[www.justlanded.com/english/Denmark/Health](http://www.justlanded.com/english/Denmark/Health)

## OFF-HOURS MEDICAL HELP

The doctors on call service called "Lægevagten" is free and open from 4 p.m. to 8 a.m. on weekdays and 24 hours on Saturdays, Sundays and on holidays. Remember to have your CPR number ready when you call.

**Here are the phone numbers of the Doctors on Call in your area:**

**Copenhagen Region and Bornholm**

**18 13**

**Zealand Region**

**70 15 07 00**

**Mid-Jutland Region**

**70 11 31 31**

**North-Jutland Region**

**70 15 03 00**

**South-Denmark Region**

**70 11 07 07**



# DENTISTS AND EXTRA HEALTHCARE SERVICES

**DENTISTRY IN DENMARK** is unfortunately not covered by the free health care system, nor is physiotherapy or psychological help.

Dentists are private practitioners. Adults over the age of 18 must find their own private dentist. Dental care in Denmark comes at a subsidised rate and the amount paid by the state will be automatically deducted from your bill. Ask your fellow students for a good dependable dentist and remember to ask about the price as well. Most dentists have websites where you can see their rates.

For physiotherapy, psychological help and specialist doctors, you can get a referral from your GP. This might lower the cost, so it is advisable to take this route.

## Sexual health

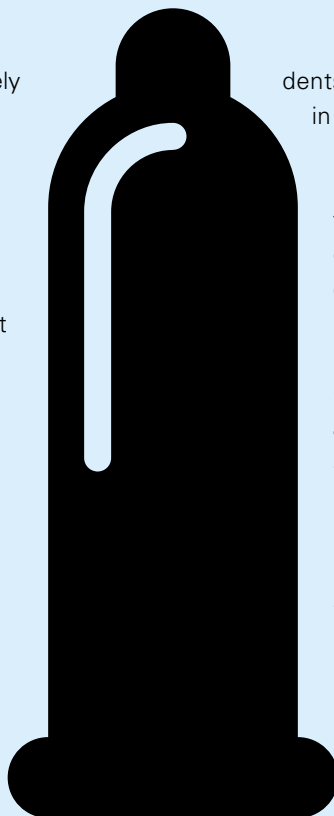
More than 90% of all university stu-

dents in Denmark have had sex at least once in their life.

Prevention and sexual health are not taboo topics (though not exactly dinner table conversation topics either), and you're considered to be responsible for your own health and safety.

Condoms are widely available and should always be used to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

If you need to talk to a doctor about your sexual health, and don't want to go to your GP, several hospitals in the bigger cities have clinics specifically designated for this purpose. However, your GP interactions are covered by professional confidentiality and the common Danish GP will never judge you for being a sexually active university student. It is after all the normal thing in Denmark.





# INSURANCE

**YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED** to make sure that you have proper insurance while studying in Denmark. This is the recommended insurance coverage for any student:

**Third-party liability insurance ('ansvarsforsikring')**

– which will cover expenses, if you have to pay compensation to another person.

**Accident insurance ('ulykkesforsikring')**

– this will cover the financial consequences and related expenses of an accident.

**Home insurance ('indboforsikring')**

– this is the insurance for your personal belongings and will protect you if there's a break in or if your things are stolen.

**Car insurance ('bilforsikring')**

– If you bring a car with you, make sure it is properly insured.

If you want to use the insurance in Denmark, contact some of the larger insurance companies. There might be good deals available through your bank or the trade union related to your field of study. Ask your fellow Danish students what they do.

*And please purchase insurance even though it seems expensive. You never know when you might need it.*

# FAMILY, CHILDREN AND PETS



**IF YOU HAVE A RESIDENCE PERMIT** as a student at a higher educational programme or at a PhD programme in Denmark, you will normally be able to bring your family with you to Denmark. Family in this context means spouse or partner plus kids.

Your spouse, registered partner or cohabiting partner can get a residence permit, as can your children under 18, if they are living with you. To be accepted as cohabiting partners, you must have lived together for a period of at least 18-24 months before moving to Denmark.

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[www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming\\_to\\_dk/studies/accompanying-family-members.htm](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/studies/accompanying-family-members.htm)

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International Citizen Service is there to help you if you have questions regarding day-care for your kids, choosing schools and the general registration of these things. It is

worth contacting them early in the process, if you plan to move to Denmark with kids, since you don't want to have to rush these things when you arrive.

## **Pets**

Remember that there are rules for bringing your pet or service animal into Denmark. It normally requires permission before travelling here, so make sure to get this in order.

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### **You can read more about it here:**

[www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/english/ImportExport/Travelling\\_with\\_pet\\_animals](http://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/english/ImportExport/Travelling_with_pet_animals)

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Remember to check with your housing contract, landlord and potential flatmates whether you are allowed to have a pet in your new Danish home. It is better to be prepared than to have any problems with your accommodation once you have already brought your pet.



# NEMID AND DIGITAL DENMARK...

**NemID (“EASY ID”) IS THE** Danish digital login solution for both public self-service, online banking and access to the digital portals for SU, SKAT etc.

NemID consists of a User ID, a Password and a code card with one-time codes. You log on by entering your User ID and your password first, and then a code from your code card.

The code card is a small laminated card, the size of a credit card, with one-time codes corresponding solely to your user.

The system is secure and reliable when used wisely (don’t save your password, don’t use it on public computers or without a firewall etc.), but it can be the source of many frustrations and jokes about how it is not, despite its name, easy. If you are having problems with NemID, know that this is not due to you being a foreigner. Chances are that your Danish classmates have experienced some of these issues as well.

You don’t have to be a Danish citizen to get a NemID, and having one will allow you to handle a lot of interactions with the Danish authorities digitally, which is easier in the long run. So it’s generally worth the trouble.

Info!

**Read more here:**

[www.nemid.nu](http://www.nemid.nu)

*Once you have a NemID, you can access [Borger.dk](http://Borger.dk), where you will find links to almost all of the Danish public services and authorities.*

<https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk>

## You can get a NemID if:

You have a Danish CPR number.

You are over 15 years old.

You have a valid and approved ID (as a valid passport and/or driver’s licence from a EU/EAA country.)

# DISABLED STUDENTS

## INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR POSSIBILITIES

and rights as an international student with a disability is hard to find. The Danish support system for mentally and physically impaired students is called SPS.

### What is SPS?

Special Educational Support provides compensatory support for full degree students with physical or psychological disabilities, giving you the opportunity to undertake your studies on equal terms with other students.

### You are eligible for Special Educational Support (SPS) if:

- › You are accepted into a full degree programme.
- › Your disability is long-term (e.g. hearing or vision problems, dyslexia, psychological or physical disabilities).
- › You have formal documentation of your diagnosed disability (e.g. from a specialist physician).
- › You are an active student.

### As well as support, you can apply for:

- › Special conditions during your exams.
- › Exemption from academic progress requirements.
- › Exemption from maximum study period requirements (apply early!).
- › If you're an exchange or guest student, you can only get help from the SPS with funding from your home country.

Info!

### Read more by clicking the relevant link below:

*Full Degree students*  
*Exchange and guest students*

We also recommend that you contact HSK - the organization for students and alumni with disabilities. They can help you if you lack information or have additional questions.



# INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICES IN AALBORG AARHUS ODENSE AND COPENHAGEN

## INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE NORTH

Slotspladsen 1, Opgang A  
9000 Aalborg  
P: +4572568920 / north@icitizen.dk

### Office hours:

Tuesday 11am - 3pm and  
Thursday 1pm - 5pm

## INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE WEST

Hack Kampmanns Plads 10  
8000 Aarhus C  
P: +4572223375 / west@icitizen.dk

### Office hours:

Thursday 1pm - 5pm and  
Friday 9am - 1pm

## INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE SOUTH

Dannebrogsgade 3  
1.th, 5000 Odense C  
P: +4572205420 / south@icitizen.dk

### Office hours:

Tuesday 12pm - 4pm and  
Thursday 12pm - 4pm

## INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE EAST

Gyldenløvesgade 11  
1600 København  
P: +4533666606 / east@icitizen.dk

### Office hours:

Monday to Wednesday 10am - 3pm  
Thursday 11am - 3pm  
Friday 10am - 2pm



# STUDENT LIFE

**OKAY. YOU HAVE ARRIVED**, you have conquered the paperwork and braved the weather and now you are ready to start your studies.

Even though you're probably already aware that there are great differences between your home country's university system and the Danish one, you might still find yourself surprised by how Danish student life works.

Though the Danish universities often have a campus area, actual university campuses do not exist.

Rather than be confined to a "campus," the universities function as part of the city they are placed in. As a student, you will get to utilize the surrounding city as part of your university experience.

The universities are mainly concerned with the academic part of your student life. They aim to ensure your academic development, but generally don't interfere with your life outside of class. This means that your Danish university will probably not offer the same non-academic services that your university offers back home. Don't worry! The services are still there; only they're not necessarily run by the universities, but by governmental or non-profit organizations, or by student-run communities.

Being a student is generally viewed as being a job in Denmark. It is something you do for a living, and not as a bubble shielded from the things you have to deal with in a "normal" adult life.

As a student, you will normally live in residential halls (called kollegiums), shared flats or maybe even your own flat. You will cook, clean, pay your bills and do everything else yourself, and then commute (by bike or public transportation) to the university where you have your classes. You will study, prepare, read and agonize over exams, but what you do in your free time is not based on what you study.

While a lot of Danish students are very social with their fellow students, the basis of social life and activities for students are not organized through the university as such. You will (hopefully) meet people and make friends there, but what you choose to fill your life with outside of your studies is completely up to you, but also dependent on the available opportunities in your new city.

You are the one who gets to structure your life and studies in a way that makes sense to you.



Info!

**If you want tips on how to structure your life as a Danish student, there are useful tips here:**

*[www.studycph.dk/study/study-tips](http://www.studycph.dk/study/study-tips)*



# BEING A STUDENT

**MOST DANISH UNIVERSITIES** use a mix of lectures and smaller classroom-based sessions. The larger lectures mainly consist of the professor discussing a subject, often using slides or examples, whereas the smaller classroom sessions are more interactive and place a greater emphasis on student participation and discussion.

The ethos of Danish universities is to “take responsibility for your own education,” meaning that you are rarely tested on the readings and that class attendance is often not even mandatory. Do not take this as a reason to skip class or to not do the reading. You will still have exams and assignments that you need to pass and many subjects might include group work with other students, who are depending on you to show up prepared.

As a rule, the Danish education system requires the students to be independent, inquiring and responsible. It is rare to encounter a professor who will tell you exactly how you should complete an assignment, or what to write in an exam, and this can be a big



adjustment when compared to teaching styles in other countries.

Ask all the questions you need to, but be aware that most teachers in Denmark would be more inclined to help you to find the solutions for yourself, than to give you a straight up answer. Being able to solve the problems on your own is a large component of the Danish exams, and innovative and individual inputs are often rewarded, as long as they are academically sound and validly argued.

There is generally not a very strict hierarchy between the professor and the students at Danish universities, most professors will ask you to call them by their first name rather than address them as Mrs., Mister, Doctor or Professor. The lack of hierarchy also means, that you can discuss various ideas for exams and assignments with your professor, without having to follow all of their instructions or ideas on the subject. If your point of view is academically valid, you don't necessarily have to agree with every point your professor makes.

A lot of a Danish university student's work will be based on the assigned reading and on completing assignments either on your own or in groups.

Studying on your own is a big part of your education here. You will have to keep yourself motivated throughout the semester, since there aren't quizzes or attendance to check that you are actively following the course.

Even if you don't have required group assignments, having a small study group can be beneficial and will both hold you accountable and prevent the studying from getting too lonely and boring.

In order to maximize your efficiency, we recommend that you find other places than your bedroom to read and work.

If you live at a kollegium, there might be common study halls in the building that you can use. If you live in an apartment or house, try to go elsewhere. Your university and faculty will definitely have areas that are suitable for studying, and both the university and public libraries have rooms for reading and writing, as well as small study rooms where you can discuss assignments and the literature with your study group. A lot of cafés have wifi and separate quieter areas that people use for studying. There is also your local Studenterhuset, which is a fail-safe space to meet up with your study group – they even have cheap coffee.



## Libraries

In Denmark we have public libraries as well as university libraries. The public libraries are open for everyone and you can register as a user when you have a CPR number. Ask your local library how. The public libraries function more as civic centres than research facilities and have a diverse selection of genres and media. Your local library will often host events and various social initiatives.

The university and royal libraries have more restrictive user policies – ask about or look up the rules before assuming that you can use them. As a rule, your home university and institute's libraries will definitely be open for you. Click the link below to find relevant and updated academic materials, reading halls, librarians who can help your literature search and being a user will often grant you with access to online databases and materials as well.

**Info!**

### **Database and reservation from all Danish libraries:**

[www.bibliotek.dk/eng](http://www.bibliotek.dk/eng)

### **The Royal Library and links to university libraries:**

[www.kb.dk/en](http://www.kb.dk/en)

# PRACTICAL UNIVERSITY INFO



## Semesters

The Danish academic year starts by September 1st of each year. Some universities will hold classes in late August. It is normal for the spring semester to start around February 1st, after the winter-exams, which are often in December and January. The summer break usually takes place from late June to mid-August.

Most universities and faculties use the 2-semester model, but some schools have a “block”-structure, where the academic year is divided into 4 smaller blocks with exams after each one. Summer break and start-of-year dates are usually the same throughout the different universities.

Remember to check up on when your semester starts, so you will have enough time to get settled before you have to be in class. Account for time for pre-semester activities and courses.

Your stay here will be far more more enjoyable if you don't have to get a CPR-number, find an apartment AND start class on the same day.

## Grades

The Danish School system uses a 7-point grading scale. It was introduced in 2007 to make Danish grades easier to compare in an international context.

The top grade is a 12 (an “A”) and the lowest passing grade is 02.

[www.eng.uvm.dk/Education/General/7-point-grading-scale](http://www.eng.uvm.dk/Education/General/7-point-grading-scale)

Some of your classes might have an attendance requirement for passing, while some courses might simply be pass/fail, in which case will be determined at the end of the semester.

The type of grading normally depends on what kind of exam you take for the course and what kind of curriculum is required and used.

When you start a new course, remember to check the form of the curriculum, the method of exam and what kind of grading system your professor plans to use.

Your professor should know the above and be able to tell you. If not, your institute's student counsellor can help you.





## Counselling and “where to go”:

There are various places where you can go to get answers to your questions and help for the issues you might have as a student in Denmark.

If you have questions about being an international student – your university’s Internationale Kontor (International office) is the place to go.

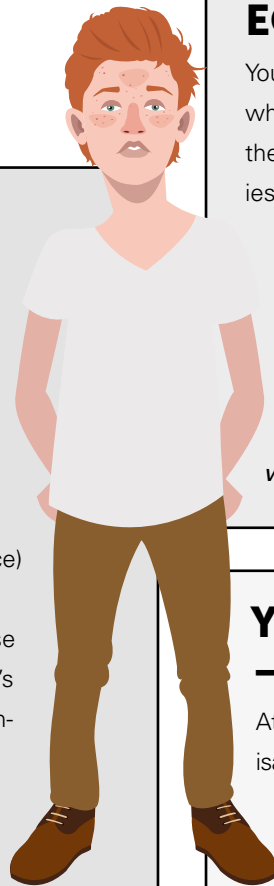
If your questions are of a more course and study based nature – your institute’s Studievejleder (students’ guidance counsellor) is your go-to person.

If you have issues with a professor or are having administrative problems, you can also start by talking to your studievejleder. They can advise you on where to take your complaints and how to solve your problem.

Some universities have a “student ambassador” that can help with such things as well.

Remember that if you feel like you’ve been treated unfairly or incorrectly, you will always have an opportunity to appeal. There are processes set in place for filing complaints and appeals, and you shouldn’t be persecuted for doing this, as long as you follow the correct procedures. The incorrupt and generally unbiased nature of the Danish university system allows all voices to be heard, even if the decision doesn’t end up in your favour.

If you feel like there are things about your student environment or structure that you’d like to change, you can get involved in your local student council.



## ECTS

Your courses are measured by the ECTS system, which determine how much of a “full time study” the course constitutes. One year of full time studies is 60 ECTS points.

The system is used to compare courses across universities and countries in Europe, and is valuable when you need to transfer your merits from one university to another.

A bachelor’s degree in Denmark is normally 180 ECTS points and a master’s degree is 120.

[www.studyineurope.eu/ects-system](http://www.studyineurope.eu/ects-system)

## Your local student council – Studenterråd

At every Danish university, there is a student organisation that works for the interests of all students.

Your local Studenterråd (Student Council) is open to all students who want to improve student living conditions, the curriculum, the study environment and many other things. Activities and membership is usually free.

Most of the Studenterråd don’t have a lot of information about the groups in English yet, but they are really nice people and will try to help you in anyway that they can.

Contact them by mail, Facebook etc. or set up a meeting.

### University of Copenhagen:

[www.srku.dk/english](http://www.srku.dk/english)

### Denmark’s Technical University:

[www.pf.dk](http://www.pf.dk)

### IT University:

[www.stup.it](http://www.stup.it)

### Copenhagen Business School:

[www.cbsstudents.dk](http://www.cbsstudents.dk)

### Roskilde University Center:

[www.studenterraadet.dk/en](http://www.studenterraadet.dk/en)

### University of Southern Denmark:

[www.syddanskestuderende.dk](http://www.syddanskestuderende.dk)

### University of Aarhus:

[www.sr.au.dk](http://www.sr.au.dk)

### University of Aalborg:

[www.studentersamfundet.aau.dk](http://www.studentersamfundet.aau.dk)



# LIFE OUTSIDE UNI



## Student jobs

A lot of Danish students have jobs alongside their studies. These can be either part-time jobs in the service sector or private childcare. It can also be jobs relevant to their studies; either at the university as student employees or in the field of employment that they wish to work in after university.

Getting a student job is of course a great way to fund your life as a student, and it can be a wonderful way to meet people, makes friends and learn about the Danish work culture. It can however be complicated for international students to find a student job, which is why we have written an entire chapter about this later in this book.

## Social life and student-run initiatives

Not having a campus life as such means that your social life as a student will depend on how much you choose to engage in social activities.

Though not run directly by the university, there are a bunch of social activities at the universities, often run by students either from your own field of study or from the university as a whole.

Some of the most common social initiatives at the Danish universities are the Friday bars. This is where you can go to hang out with your fellow students each Friday, wind down with a drink and have fun. Some of the bars function as volunteer cafés during the week, which can give you a social meeting point Monday to Friday. Often there will be a party committee related to the Friday bar as well, that will organize bigger parties for either their own field of study or the entire institute or faculty. If you want to meet students from other programs than your own, doing a "Friday bar pubcrawl" can be a fun way to do so.

## Student Houses

All of the big university cities have a student house, all of which are called Studenterhus or Studenterhuset. These are volunteer-run student organisations with a café/bar/concert venue that host a lot of social and student-related activities. You can either join their events or sign up as volunteer.

### Copenhagen:

[www.studenterhuset.com/en](http://www.studenterhuset.com/en)

[www.facebook.com/studenterhusetkbh](https://www.facebook.com/studenterhusetkbh)

### Odense:

[www.studenterhus.dk](http://www.studenterhus.dk)

[www.facebook.com/StudenterhusOdense](https://www.facebook.com/StudenterhusOdense)

### Aarhus:

[www.studenterhusaarhus.dk/frontpage](http://www.studenterhusaarhus.dk/frontpage)

[www.facebook.com/StudenterhusAarhus](https://www.facebook.com/StudenterhusAarhus)

### Aalborg:

[www.studenterhuset.dk/index.php?id=index\\_en](http://www.studenterhuset.dk/index.php?id=index_en)

[www.facebook.com/studenterhuset.aalborg](https://www.facebook.com/studenterhuset.aalborg)

## Meeting people

Most universities have social immersion programs designed specifically for international students. These can be referred to as mentor-, tutor- or buddy programs, the names differing from university to university.

They are essentially programs pairing Danish (or already established international students) with newly arrived international students in order to give them a fun and safe introduction to their new life as a student in Denmark. In most cases, you can sign up as soon as you have been admitted to your university, so remember to check if this is a possibility for you once you have received your admittance letter.

A lot of the activities that you are used to having offered at your home institution might also be available here. There are student or university-run sport clubs, choirs, societies for various interests and charities. Often you just have to ask around or keep an eye out for the posters hanging around campus to see what activities are available.

Most universities also have a yearly party or event for all of their students.

## Hobbies & interests

Since Danish students often have social lives that take place outside of the university, you should also try to find activities off campus. Get involved in the city – enjoy the cultural opportunities or the outdoors, volunteer for an organization that is not necessarily related to the university or seek out your own interests. Most of Danish civil life is organized in the form known as “foreninger” and there is almost something for every interest on the planet, so if you are looking for something specific in terms of sports or hobbies, just Google it. Chances are your new city will have a forening for whatever it is that you are looking for, and joining that club or activity will be a great way of meeting new people.

For more tips on how to get involved socially and meet new friends – jump to “meeting the Danes”





# HOUSING

## CUE THE HORROR MUSIC...

Now we come to the really complicated part about being a student in Denmark: Finding a place to live.

House hunting is never a particularly fun thing to do, but here are some tips to help you navigate the jungle of flat shares, dorms, sublets and dodgy landlords...

First of all: Start early. Preferably, you should begin looking as soon as you are accepted into a Danish university, but at least a month or more before you arrive in Denmark, as it can take quite a while to find a place.

In the months leading up to the start of a semester, there is normally a rush of people looking for student-friendly accommodation, particularly in the bigger cities. This is especially a problem in July and August, leading up to the start of the academic year in September.

If you haven't been able to find anything prior to coming, make sure that you have the funds to cover the worst case scenario; such as staying at a hostel or a hotel for a long period of time. Airbnb and other private temporary sublet services are also an option here, but are often more expensive than traditional student housing.

Universities in Denmark usually have a very limited number of student residences at their disposal. However, some universities do offer assistance in finding accommodation, so ask your university before trying to find accommodation on your own.

In regards to budgeting, remember that different cities have different price tags. Aarhus is the most expensive housing-wise, but Copenhagen is hot on its tails. Odense and Aalborg are less expensive, but no one in their right mind would call living in a Danish university town *cheap*...

Info!

[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/housing-1/how-to-find-housing](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/housing-1/how-to-find-housing)

If you are okay with living outside the city centre/right next to the university, you can save on rent. Remember to check bus/train access, commute time and “bike-to-city-and-university” times before signing a contract, so that you are sure it is possible to get to university on time in the morning

Student housing is somewhat different in Denmark than it is in other countries. Rather than apply through the university, you must apply directly to the residence hall (kollegium) or sign up on a waiting list. It can be difficult to get a room in a Danish kollegium due to the high levels of competition, so we'd advice you to start applying before you arrive in Denmark.

As this kind of housing is not always readily available in Denmark, we therefore encourage you to look other housing options as well. By living off-campus, you will be exposed to more of the city and be more likely to experience life in Denmark outside of the university bubble.

***Good luck with your house hunting!***

## Make a budget

Here are a few links with information on suggested budgets so as to give you an idea about living expenses in Denmark, including rent:

[www.sdu.dk/en/information\\_til/internationale\\_studerende/life\\_in\\_denmark/living\\_expenses](http://www.sdu.dk/en/information_til/internationale_studerende/life_in_denmark/living_expenses)

[www.dtu.dk/english/Education/International-Student-Guide/For-admitted-students/Living-expenses](http://www.dtu.dk/english/Education/International-Student-Guide/For-admitted-students/Living-expenses)

[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/bank-budget](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/bank-budget)





# HOW TO FIND A PLACE TO LIVE

## Official channels

This is where most people start. It is not good for short-term solutions, but if you get in, you will have a secure housing situation as long as you are a student. You simply contact the various providers of kollegiums and student flats and sign up for the waiting list. If you are lucky, they have something for you on short notice, but it's not something we would recommend that you count on. However, if you plan to stay in Denmark for more than one semester, join a waiting list or complete an application for one or several dorms. That way you might have better prospects for semesters to come, instead of a long string of sublets and temporary solutions.

## Private/ public postings

It is pretty self-explanatory. You check for postings either on social media, poster walls, in forums and on services for these postings. Contact the person renting out a room or an apartment and take it from there.

It is common to go see the apartment before you agree to move in. Do not pay any deposit or hand over any money without having signed a contract beforehand or been given a key. Bring a friend with you when you go to see the apartment, that way you won't be as vulnerable to a landlord pressuring you into accepting terms you don't want to.

## Facebook, social media and network

There are a bunch of housing groups on Facebook, and some of them are even specifically for international students. Find the ones relevant to your city and join them. Be aware that most postings will get a ton of replies and quickly be gone. Use caution in regards to deposits and contract.

There is always the risk that the posting may be a scam. In these groups, people might also warn each other about frauds, so they are great places to keep updated.

You can also use Facebook and other social media platforms to let your network know that you are currently looking for a place to stay. Let your classmates, friends and co-workers know that you are looking for housing, so that in the event that they hear of something, they will be sure to let you know. Danish students use Facebook to find a place to live, so you might as well join the party.

Make a post stating that you are looking for housing, remember to mention your city, preferred area and your budget for rent and ask people to contact you if they hear about anything. If you make your post public, your friends can even share it for you, resulting in a larger network of people who will see it.

## University services

All of the major universities in Denmark have some kind of housing office or service as well. What they can offer differs from city to city, but it is worth contacting them. Some of the big universities are listed here - otherwise ask at your school's international office:

### **Copenhagen:**

[www.housingfoundation.ku.dk](http://www.housingfoundation.ku.dk)

### **Aarhus:**

[www.studenterhusaarhus.dk/Projekter/Startup-Housing](http://www.studenterhusaarhus.dk/Projekter/Startup-Housing)

### **Aalborg:**

[www.en.aau.dk/education/apply/international-accommodation-office](http://www.en.aau.dk/education/apply/international-accommodation-office)

### **Odense:**

[www.sdu.dk/en/Information\\_til/Internationale\\_studerende/Accommodation/Campus+Odense](http://www.sdu.dk/en/Information_til/Internationale_studerende/Accommodation/Campus+Odense)

# HOUSING OPTIONS

## Kollegium (*Residential halls and dorms*)

Kollegiums are the Danish form of student residences. The kollegiums in Denmark house students from a variety of different universities and education levels, and are often located throughout the city. Many of the kollegiums have their own traditions, and will encourage an active social participation. This is a good way to meet students outside your own field of studies.

In these facilities, students stay in a single room, and usually share a big kitchen with 3-25 other people. The kitchens have common areas where students hang out with other residents. Living in this type of kollegium is often a very social experience and a great way to meet new people.

Some kollegiums are designed as apartments, either with your own kitchen and bathroom, or as big apartments where you share a kitchen, bathroom and common area with 2-5 other people. These kollegiums offer a bit more privacy, but don't have the same social environment as the kollegiums with large, shared kitchens.

Admittance to a kollegium is usually determined by a waiting list, but some kollegiums accept new residents based on motivated or creative personal applications.



Danish students living in kollegiums often sublet their rooms to other students when they go abroad for a semester. Ask people living in kollegiums if they know of anyone who will be subletting their room, or keep an eye out for relevant Facebook posts in the kollegium groups. You can also check out Housing Anywhere.

### **CIU – the centralized Kollegium and student flat service:**

[www.findbolig.nu/Common/Help/English.aspx](http://www.findbolig.nu/Common/Help/English.aspx)

### **Housing Anywhere (subletting)**

[www.housinganywhere.com](http://www.housinganywhere.com)

### **Kollegiernes Kontor (for Copenhagen)**

[www.kollegierneskontor.dk/default.aspx?lang=GB](http://www.kollegierneskontor.dk/default.aspx?lang=GB)





Tip!


**CULTURAL TIP:** Danes normally consider it a given that you take your shoes off when you enter a person's flat.



## Shared flats, renting, sublets, rooms

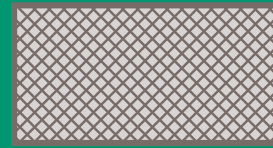
Most of the Danish students who don't live in kollegiums or student flats choose to live in privately rented or shared flats, often sublets, social housing or flats owned by private landlords.

There are a lot of websites that you can search to find housing advertisements from private landlords. Some of them are free, but the majority of sites will charge a fee to reveal the owner's contact information. If you have other friends who are also looking for a place to stay, it might be a good idea to split the fee and only make one shared profile.


If your university has online bulletin board or pin boards at campus these can also be good places to look for private postings for rooms and flats. Another good resource for finding people who are subletting or renting rooms can be Facebook groups. 

When searching online, beware of scammers. See our tips to avoid scams on the housing market later in this chapter.

When sharing a flat (or a kollegium kitchen) make sure to talk about rules for cleaning, noise levels and having parties in the flat. This is normally where people disagree, which can lead to issues between flatmates. It's better to set out the rules before any problems occur so that you're not dealing with angry housemates.




## Student flats

Most cities in Denmark have a number of rental flats set aside for students and young people. These are normally great deals, but require you to fulfil various criteria and the waiting list is often long, even for Danes. 

[www.findbolig.nu](http://www.findbolig.nu) is a great place to search for these, as this website covers most of these apartments.

## What to expect

The harsh truth is that housing is very difficult to come by, even for Danes. It is very unlikely that you will be able to find a place in which you may live on your own that is also considered affordable.

Most live in kollegiums or share a flat with other people. Expect the same to be the case for you. 

If you get a room in a flat with access to a shower and kitchen, or a room at a kollegium and it's within 30-40 minutes (bus or bike) from your university, you're living under the same circumstances as your Danish co-students.

You can often save money by moving further away from the city, but remember to factor in the money you will need for transportation.



# FURNITURE

**IF YOU ARE SUBLETTING** or renting a private room or flat, it is often already furnished, which will make your life a lot easier. However; there might come a time, where you need furniture or other things, so here are some tips on how to pick up the things you need, without breaking the bank:

IKEA is big in Denmark, as it is in the rest of the world. Sometimes they even have student discounts, so remember to check for those before going. Some universities do “IKEA drives” by bus from the campus during the start of the semester, which makes transportation so much easier. Keep an eye out for postings about this, or ask your fellow students if they want to join you on an IKEA adventure. A dinner of Ikea’s famous Swedish meatballs, is a cheap price to pay for help with carrying and assembling your new furniture.

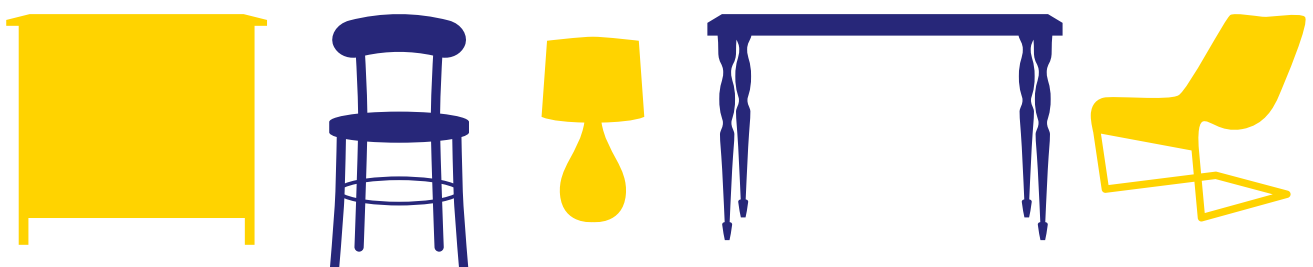
Though Denmark is known for its expensive designer furniture, there are cheap furniture alternatives, which are

available at shops such as Jysk, Tiger and many of the large supermarkets.

Second-hand furniture is another way to go. Most cities have a Red Cross and other charity stores, which sell both affordable and more expensive second-hand furniture. The furniture from these stores should have already been cleaned by the time of purchase.

Online postings like DBA.dk are also a great place to look for cheap furniture. It is a good idea to go and see the object in person to check that the quality is as you believed it to be before you purchase it.

Of course, there are also many groups on Facebook, in which people post things to sell or even give away for free, so find one in your area. Maybe someone wants to get rid of just the thing you are looking for.



# HOW TO AVOID HOUSING SCAMS

**AS IN ALL CITIES** with a competitive rental market, housing scams do occur when it comes to student accommodation in the Danish university towns. Students, and international students in particular, are often in urgent need of housing and are unfortunately therefore more likely to fall victim to dishonest people.

Make sure you set time aside to look at housing ads and ask your friends and classmates, so that you have a solid understanding of prices and housing standards. The key elements here are to never pay without getting anything in writing and remember that if it seems dodgy or too good to be true, it probably is.

If you don't get the rental agreement in writing or if you "pay money under the table" to get the flat, and it turns out to be a scam, you have no legal claim. So get a contract stating how much the rent is, how long you can live there and what the terms are for giving notice, being asked to move out etc. You can avoid a lot of unpleasant experiences by doing this.

If you do encounter unpleasant experiences or are scammed, the organization Lejernes LO offers advice and legal counselling to people who have problems with their landlords. They can advise you on your rights and possibilities.



Info!

[www.lejerneslo.dk/Om-LLO/Internationalt.aspx](http://www.lejerneslo.dk/Om-LLO/Internationalt.aspx)



## DOs

- › Check who owns the rental property
- › Always view the rental property
- › Check the rent level
- › Get everything in writing
- › Document any defects (photos are a good idea)
- › Note when subletting, and what the rules are for the specific subletting deal
- › Make sure that the property is consistent with the rental contract
- › Make sure to go through the property
- › Double-check the legality of the arrangement if you can't have your postal address there



## DON'Ts

- › Never pay by cash
- › Never pay via a foreign bank account or money transfer service
- › Don't accept landlord pressure
- › Don't be too critical about location
- › Never pay money under the table
- › Don't pay too much in deposit and prepaid rent
- › Be aware of non-Danish speaking landlords, especially if they are located abroad.

## DANISH APARTMENTS AND ADDRESSES...

Danish housing calls the ground floor 0 (or st. for stuen), the floor above that is the 1st floor and so forth.

In Denmark, the number of “rooms” determines the apartment size. This number created by combining the bedrooms and living room – but does not include the kitchen, bathroom or hallways.

In regards to apartment blocks, apartment addresses are written as street name, house number, floor number (st., 1st, 2nd etc) followed by apartment placement – th., mf., and tv. This means “to the right”, “the middle” and “to the left”.

Remember to include your postal code and city name (as in 1150 København K) when writing your address.

## PRACTICAL INFO:

Tap water is drinkable all over Denmark and often of a better quality than expensive bottled water.

Danish houses are normally very well insulated – double (or even triple) glazed windows and double walls will keep the cold out during the winter.

Most Danish apartments are heated with radiators that use hot water. Turn them on when it starts to get cold. Normally the “3” setting will ensure a nice and cosy room. As the radiators run via thermostats, remember to turn off the radiator when you have opened windows - that way you’ll avoid expensive heating bills.

It’s normal for kollegiums and apartment buildings to have a common laundry room for all of the tenants, so don’t be surprised if there isn’t a washing machine in your apartment. Ask for info about the “vaskekælder” when moving in.

## LET THE HOUSE HUNTING BEGIN – here are some links to get you started

**[www.boligsurf.dk](http://www.boligsurf.dk)**: Flats, shared apartments and rooms for rent.

**[www.boligdeal.dk](http://www.boligdeal.dk)**: Site coordinating communication between tenants, buyers and landlords of private housing.

**[www.findroommate.dk](http://www.findroommate.dk)**: Students and others looking for roommates.

**[www.lejerbo.dk](http://www.lejerbo.dk)**: Lejerbo administers apartments across Denmark, including youth housing.

**[www.dba.dk](http://www.dba.dk)**: Ebay affiliate. List of flats and rooms for rent. Some ads are free to view.

**[en.lejebolig.dk](http://en.lejebolig.dk)**: Flats, shared apartments and rooms for rent.

**[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/housing-1/how-to-find-housing](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/housing-1/how-to-find-housing)**

**[www.findbolig.nu](http://www.findbolig.nu)**





# MEETING THE DANES

**DANES.** They're everywhere and yet they can seem like an elusive rarity in your life as an international student.

Naturally they are there physically, but how do you meet them? Let alone, how do you get to know or befriend them and maybe even (drumroll) date them?

It can seem like an insurmountable task, and maybe it's easier to just hang out with the other international students and joke about the antisocial Danes, but if you want a local network as a student (the shortcut to jobs, housing and an all-around fun time in Denmark), befriending the Danes is a must.

**Cultural differences:**

First of all: The Danes aren't antisocial or hate hanging out with international students such as yourself. Yes, there are antisocial and dismissive people amongst us, but it's not the rule. We just socialize and form friendships in slightly different ways compared to what you might be used to in your home country.

Denmark has been a culturally homogenous country for centuries, so your Danish classmates might not even realize that other cultures don't do "friendships" and "hanging out" similar to how they do them.

In the same way, you might misinterpret the Danish behaviour as a lack of interest or as them being "weird", because it's different from what you're used to.

Use the cultural differences to your advantage by being curious and interested in your fellow Danish students and talk about their culture compared to yours. Most people love to talk about their background and appreciate people who are genuinely interested.

Most Danes learn to form social bonds through school, hobbies, sport and work. This means that we're not very used to socializing with strangers, and many Danish students who haven't developed friendships within those traditional categories also struggle with being lonely at times.

The ones who aren't lonely might still be interested in new friends too, but they probably already have a fully packed life with old friends, family, jobs and hobbies, so they might not be as active in looking for new friends as you are, leaving you to believe that they aren't interested in hanging out.

The thing you need to remember is, that even if your new Danish classmates don't say so, they might be interested in getting to know you. You just have to approach them in the right way, and maybe take a bit more initiative than you're used to doing in your home country.

Generally speaking, many expats will say that "Danes only talk/hang out with people they know", which of course can become a problem if you're interested in meeting new people and forming a network in a new city. However, there are ways around this and we will cover those as well as certain quirks of social interaction that are culturally typical for Danish students.

As with all people, regardless of culture, your fellow students have individual personalities, so unfortunately we can only offer tips and tricks, not a one-size-fits-all solution.

**Hygge**

We have to cover it, right? The elusive and alluring Danish concept of hygge...

Google translate will tell you it means "fun", "cosiness" or "comfort", but you can't really grasp the idea until you have experienced it.

Hygge is both hanging out with friends, cosying up on your own, being outside in the summer or inside by candlelight in the winter. Try asking your Danish classmates to explain it, and you will get at least 5 different ideas about what hygge can be.

**Humour**

Another thing that you might find "weird" about your Danish friends could very well be their senses of humour. The Danish humour is "dry", sarcastic (irony is BIG here) and irreverent. You can poke fun at all authority figures and are not expected to "spare" people in leadership positions or religious figureheads. It is also very popular to be self-deprecating (often called selvironi) in your jokes. Research shows that the Danes generally don't have a problem looking foolish or laughing at their own mistakes.

The emphasis on "cringe-worthy" situations and stories might seem weird to you, but try to watch a Danish comedy show or Danish stand-up with subtitles to get an idea regarding what the Danes currently find funny.

Remember that it's okay to not find Danish humour funny or to not participate in the joke telling, but try to not take the sarcastic and irreverent jokes too personally. They are rarely meant as an insult.



# MEETING PEOPLE

The first step to finding “new Danish friends” is knowing where to meet your fellow students. Certain circumstances make for excellent windows of opportunities during which you can meet and make Danish friends, even if you don’t know anyone yet.

Some great places to meet your fellow students are:



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## Mentor/buddy programs

The universities have various mentor and buddy programs that provide a safety net, practical contacts and a social network for new international students. If you get a chance to join one, it’s a great way to meet other people from both Denmark and the rest of the world, and the people signing up to be mentors or buddies are most likely interested in getting an international network.

Even if you haven’t been in one of the programs yourself, and are a long-term international student in Denmark, ask your local international office if it’s possible for you to become a mentor or buddy in the future. This is a great way to use your experiences to help new international students and to meet new people in the process.

---

## University clubs and activities

Most schools have a wide variety of clubs, activities and foreninger (see explanation below) that you can join as a student.

Are you interested in music? Join the choir, the glee club or the yearly revue... Like your local Friday bar? Join the group organising it! Do you want to play a sport? Most institutes have their own football team. If not, the universities should have bigger central sports organisations that you can join. Each institute will often have academic clubs and an alumni organization, both of which have members who will plan social and academic events for their members.





## Friday bars and parties at your course/institute:

They're cheap, local and jam-packed with other students from your own area of education. This means, that you will definitely have something to talk about, while drinking cheap beer, drinks or soda, playing board games and complaining about exams together.

Often the institutes have a cheap student-run café, where you can hang out after classes, and chat to fellow students.

If you have any places like this at your school, go there! It is great ways to meet Danish students, especially at the beginning of the semester, where everyone will be looking for new friends and will normally be very social and more open-minded.

## Become a volunteer

Student volunteers run most of these aforementioned activities either partly or completely. Getting involved in a volunteer activity is a great way to meet Danes and provides an opportunity to bond over mutual interests and projects. People will usually be happy to hire you or have you join their organisation if you offer your time and dedication as a volunteer, so ask around if you are interested in joining an activity at your university or local student house.

There are many other ways to volunteer, and these are covered in the specific volunteering section in this chapter

## Studenterhuset aka the Student House

All the major university cities in Denmark have their own Studenterhus aka Student house. They are volunteer run non-profit organisations that organise social activities for the entire university (or all the universities if there are more than one in the city), and provide a social space for all students.

The prices are student friendly and the Student Houses function as cafés, bars, concert venues and event spaces, while providing a host of activities for the student community.

Additionally, the student houses often offer valuable activities for students besides the cheap beers – activities can be job fairs, housing events, networking events, and current affairs debates. Since the student houses are mainly volunteer run, you can either participate in the activities offered as a guest or sign up to help as a volunteer. The latter will definitely ensure that you meet a lot of new friends, and maybe even get some useful job experience on top of that.



# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## “Foreningskultur”

A thing that is unique to Danish culture and socialising is the emphasis on FORENINGER. This is relatively complicated to translate, as it is a Danish/Scandinavian concept that has been a pillar in these countries civil societies for almost 150 years. A “forening” is a democratic, membership-based organisation with a common theme, goal or activity. A board, consisting of members from the organisation, runs the forening and every member has the right to vote and participate in the activities, given that they pay the membership fee. So essentially the members participating are also the people running the activities voluntarily.

This is how almost all sports clubs, leisure activities, interests based clubs and societies and many of the volunteer organisations work in Denmark, and it is where

many people form a network outside work and school. Around 90% of all Danes are a member of at least one forening, chances are there’s a relevant one for you as well out there.

Getting involved in a forening is not only a good way to meet new people; it is also a great way to see one of the culturally specific “very Danish” institutions at work.

If you join a forening to play sports (instead of the local “pay&go” gym), not only do you get to do the sports, but there are normally also a host of other activities connected to it, like parties, fundraisers, committees to join within the club etc. Therefore it is a great way to get to meet many Danes and form a network.

# Volunteer organisations

A lot of students in Denmark do volunteer work, either on a regular basis or for special events in their city, community or within their fields of interest.

If you're interested in regular (weekly or monthly) volunteer work, your local Studenterhus is a great place to start. They normally have a big community of volunteer students and do activities related to your life as a student, whether it is bartending at their café, organizing events or doing social activities for other students. If you want to join, contact your local Studenterhus (links below).

The various non-profit cafés and charity organisations in your city can also be a great place to volunteer, especially if you're in Denmark for more than a few months. The volunteer opportunities here are many and diverse. A lot of these jobs are visible on frivilligjob.dk, but you can also ask your fellow students about volunteer opportunities in your city.

Remember that a lot of volunteer work is done within the various foreninger, so if you're interested in a particular

forening, there are normally many opportunities to get involved here as well.

Many Danish students also volunteer on a more event based volunteering too. This is normally done at music festivals and other cultural events (film festivals, fashion week and historical celebrations are all based on volunteer work as well), and can be a great way to meet new people, have fun and get new experiences without having to commit on a weekly basis.

Google the events you're interested in several months before the event, normally they do posts about looking for volunteers on their websites.

For big music festivals like Roskilde Festival, you can also sign up to volunteer alongside some of your friends and fellow students, so it becomes a social event in itself. This is how many Danish students finance their festivals, as it otherwise gets expensive otherwise on an SU.





# DANISH FRIENDS...

## (IT IS A PROCESS, NOT A MAGIC FIX)

**MANY DANES ARE** still friends with people they go far back with; they might have friends from their primary school, high school or from their junior football team and scout patrols back when they were 10. Even though they might not tell you, many Danes think forming new friendships as grown-ups is just as complicated as you might find it. This is because we are primarily used to forming friendships in certain ways.

It's worth remembering that Danes often distinguish between FRIENDS, who are understood to be the few you're really close to, and then friends/acquaintances/classmates/colleagues, who are the people whom they know and are social with, but don't hang out with just the two of them/don't plan things exclusively with. The Danish word for friends "venner" tends to be used in a

more exclusive way than the English term, and you might even hear a Dane say, "yeah, we hang out and it's fun, but we're not venner (yet)" about people they know. This does not mean that the person doesn't appreciate hanging out with you, but that you might not be close enough to qualify you as one of their exclusive venner.

### So how to befriend the Danes? (Like a Dane...)

Most Danish students have met their friends through school, work, volunteering, sports and hobbies. Even though they have met through a common activity, it is however rare to consider yourself friends right from the start. You do that activity "alongside" each other for a time; probably chatting casually and realizing you click and have fun together.

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Tip!

## Friendship tips

- › Be patient. Social relationships with Danes tend to take a little more time to form.
  - › Join some clubs/projects/hobbies that you find fun and engaging. Doing things together is a great way to meet people.
  - › Talk to people and go to the social gatherings of the things you're involved with.
  - › If the Danes seem closed off, remember that they might be trying to respect your private space or simply are shy or insecure. Approach them and see what happens.
  - › Danes can also be shy and might find it just as hard to make friends as you do.
  - › Don't expect to jump straight to best friend territory immediately.
  - › But do take the initiative and suggest doing stuff together.
-

## The awkward art of the Danish invitation:

If it's bigger social events like a Friday bar or a class party, everyone in that context is considered invited. This means that you might not get an "official" invitation to these events, but you are still invited. If you are unsure about going by yourself, ask your fellow students if you'll see them there, and make plans to meet up at the event.

For more private social events, you'll normally be invited. If it's a private party, it's common courtesy to RSVP no matter if you can attend it or not.

When attending private parties or hanging out with an already established group of friends, it's considered polite behaviour to ask before you bring someone outside the group along with you.

Maybe that leads to casual socialising, which still relates to the thing you do together, talking while biking home from sports, eating lunch together at school etc.

Then you go on to do something social – but not just the two of you, since you are still "getting to know each other". These social things can be a party for your class, a trip for the sports club or with your hobby, a dinner for the entire volunteer crew. These are good ways to be social while still in the safe context of what you do "together", which will make the Dane feel like the friendship is developing naturally.

If alcohol is involved, that might speed up the process (sad but true), but it's not a necessity.

After this social activity (or several of these), you can safely ask to do something social together that is separate from the activity which you initially met doing.

A word of warning though: Danes rarely say, "let's have coffee" to people that they aren't already good friends with. Having coffee in a café is often used as a way to catch up with people you already know. However; if you feel like having coffee with your new friend, try to invite them – they might very well say yes if they feel like they know you from your common activity.

Now you are entering the "good friends" territory and it's perfectly normal to do things together without having to make up excuses to justify being around them.

### Scheduling, punctuality and spontaneous hanging outs

One thing you might discover when becoming friends with the Danes is that the average Danish student like to schedule most things in their life, including their social time.

Since this is the norm, punctuality is valued, and you will be expected to at least let your friends know in advance when you are running late or have to cancel. Text messages are acceptable here, and cancelling "in good time" is considered to be polite if you realize you can't meet up.

The scheduling also means that it can be a bit complicated to find time to make plans with your Danish friends on a short notice. Don't take this as an insult or a dismissal of seeing you – try suggesting a date further into the future, so you both can make it.

Due to this; while the individual Danish student might be fine with spontaneous visits, your success rate for spontaneous plans are probably better if they are in the form of a "wanna do something later today" text, rather than you simply turning up on their doorstep because you were in the neighbourhood.



**IN ALL HONESTY,** Danes don't really date... not in the way you might be used to dating at least.

There is no "formalized" dating structure in Denmark, no unwritten rules about who-calls-who or who-pays-on-the-date. The arrival of various dating apps might have changed how often the Danes go on dates with people they don't already know, but the word 'date' is still used just as often about an already established couple who have been together for awhile.

80% of all 19-year-old Danes have had sex – so please don't expect your Danish date to be a virgin. Having pre-marital sex is not seen as shameful or wrong; sex is simply a natural thing for young people to have experienced in Denmark. You have sexual education all through primary and high school, and it's normal for Danish parents to let their teenagers' boyfriends/girlfriends sleep over as well.

Remember to take care of yourself and use protection – condoms are the only thing that protect you against sexually transmitted diseases. It's your own responsibility to insist on using protection, don't let your partner convince you to skip it before you're in a monogamous relationship and have been tested for STIs. And it's not embarrassing to tell your sexual partner to use protection – though we admit it can be awkward for everyone, also for the Danes.

Also remember that though many Danes are sexually experienced, you have every right to enforce your own personal boundaries, and say yes and no to intimate activities depending on what you want.

No matter what, sexual intercourse requires consent from the involved partners, so always make sure to have that!

Please note that consumption of alcohol neither negates nor constitutes consent in a Danish legal context. So avoid drinking so much alcohol that you are no longer able to make safe and informed decisions about sex and your body. If you believe that you were sexually assaulted, there are clinics in all of the major Danish hospitals that are designed specifically for this purpose. You are and should feel safe to report it to the police.

Most people meet their romantic partners through friends, school, work or the clubs and organisations that they are a part of, meaning that they've often gotten to know that person before getting involved or starting to date.

The Danish word "kæreste" is considered more serious and committed than "just" dating, and can mean both boyfriend and girlfriend as well as "live in partner" in many instances.



# EXPLORE YOUR CITY

**MEETING THE DANES** is also about doing activities “like the Danes” with your friends.

During the (short, but sweet) summer, most university cities in Denmark have a great outdoor life.

People take disposable grills out into the parks and have a low-key, social barbecue, bring wine and beer to the beach, go to outdoor movie screenings (often for free) in parks and play ballgames on the nearest patch of grass.

If there are outdoor sports facilities in your area, these are often also used for social purposes.

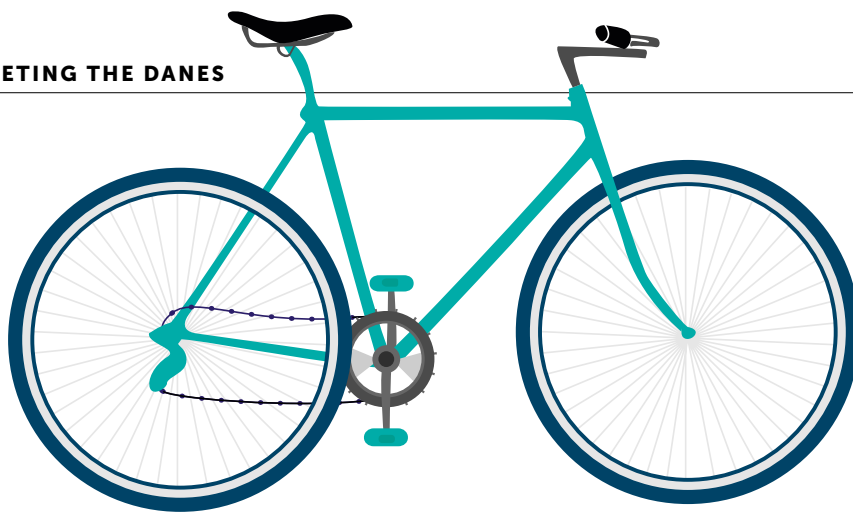
During the colder seasons you can still go for a walk outside (remember your raincoat and a warm sweater) or even go to the skating rinks that most cities have during winter.

All through the year there will be a ton of cultural and social events in all of the major Danish cities. These events can be various festivals (music, film, art, food),

cultural happenings, carnivals or big block parties. Sometimes all of these are combined into big city-wide celebrations like Aarhus festuge or Golden Days in Copenhagen. Bring your friends, go out, explore what your local city has to offer and discover new experiences. Often these activities are for free or have student discounts on tickets. If not, it’s often possible to volunteer as well.

Even in the biggest cities in Denmark, there are rarely neighbourhoods that are actually dangerous for anyone to visit. Of course it’s a good idea to keep updated on whether there are tensions in your local area, but other than that you can safely assume that your city is safe. You should feel safe to explore the various neighbourhoods in your city and we recommend that you do so to ensure that you see and experience things outside of your university and home.

Maybe you’ll find beautiful street art, a hidden park or your new favourite pizza place.



# BIKE CULTURE

**WHEN IT COMES** to exploring your new Danish hometown, there is one tip that is more valuable than anything else:

**GET A BIKE!** It's cheaper and more flexible than busses, often quicker too, and gives you exercise and fresh air on top of that. And it's what all your fellow Danish students will also be riding, so it makes hanging out with them much easier.

The "biking the same way home from classes" is a time-tested classic when it comes to getting to know your classmates.

We suggest that you buy a used, but reliable bike from an official bike shop - it's often cheaper than renting it. If you're only here for a short while, you can rent out your bike from a specialized business, which often exist solely to rent bikes to exchange students at a favourable rate. Google it.

## How to get a bike

Cheap bikes can be found at second hand bike shops, through dba.dk and similar pages or through some of the Facebook groups for international students in your city. Many international students sell their bikes when they go back home and you can probably buy their bike for a cheap price if you keep an eye out for posts like this.

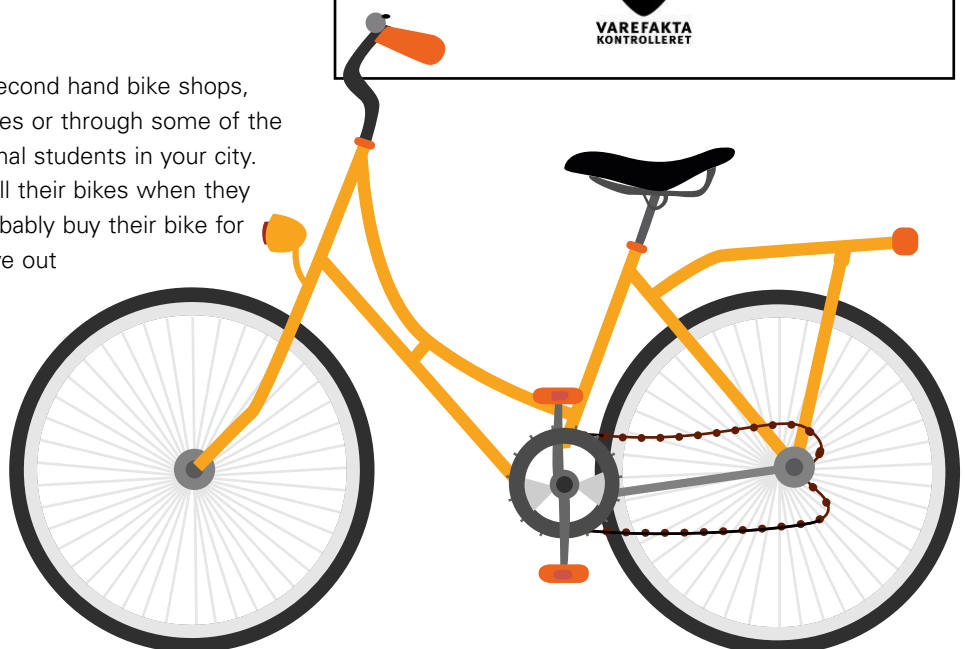
Get one that's not too fancy (eliminates the risk of theft), but not too worn out (eliminates massive repair bills) and get a secure lock for it.

Keep the number of your bike and lock in a safe place. If your bike gets stolen, you will need this number for the police and the insurance.

And since it gets cold in Denmark: Buy some lock anti-freeze from a gas station. It will save you many tears once the temperatures get below zero and your lock suddenly won't open.

If you or your friends can fix things on your bike, great! Otherwise the second hand bike shops normally do cheap repairs, or you might be lucky and there's a volunteer run bike repair shop in your city. Ask around or google it.

**Secure locks will be sold wearing this mark:**







# NIGHTLIFE AS A DANISH STUDENT

**STUDENTS GO OUT.** It is one of the fundamental facts of life, and it's no different in Denmark.

Whether you drink alcohol or not, a lot of the social life of a university student is focused around going out to bars and cafés or attending parties.

The concept of going out to dinner is not as widely used in Denmark as it is in many other cultures – probably given the price tag on restaurant food. Bigger cities will also have cheaper options like buffet style restaurants, cafés with good food, non-profit restaurants and of course ethnic food places with great affordable food.

Be aware that Danes tend to eat dinner a little earlier than you might be used to; dinner is most often eaten between 18-20.

It is however quite normal to go out after dinnertime, meaning that people will have eaten at home.

Alternatively, you can gather friends at your home and cook dinner together – if you have a kitchen that allows for this. Most student dorms have at least one evening per week reserved for common dinner, which is a cheap way to have a social meal with friends.



Be aware that it might be expected for all dinner guests to chip in and cover some of the cost for the meal you have cooked together. This way no one is stuck with the main part of the costs.

When you go out there are of course the various bars, cafés and pubs. For the student community, the local Studenterhus is a great place to start, and the same goes for the various student bars at the university. A lot of students will probably also favour the local “bodega” (Danish equivalent of the old-school British pub for locals), where the drinks will be substantially cheaper than at the fancy bars in the area.

Alcohol is normally served to everyone who is over the age of eighteen, but you should be aware that some clubs might have a 21+ rule and maybe even a dress code. In general, the Danes dress stylishly but casual when they go out. There are a lot of places that will let you in if you’re wearing sneakers and jeans, but again, be sure to check before you go out.

Another social option is the party at someone’s home. Please be aware that if you get invited to one of these by a friend or classmate, it’s considered a must to RSVP and to avoid arriving too fashionably late. It is normal and often expected that you bring your own drink, be it alcoholic or non-alcoholic, unless specified otherwise in the event description.

Many clubs and bars in Denmark tend to be open late (until 4 or 5 in the morning) and as a result of these late hours and the “eat at home before we go out” concept, your Danish friends might go out a tad later than you’re used to.

We cannot talk about parties and bars without talking alcohol culture.

And yes, the Danish student life can sometimes look like it’s revolving solely around alcohol. This doesn’t mean you can’t go out with your Danish friends if you chose to not consume alcohol. All bars and cafés will normally have non-alcoholic alternatives, and though they might offer you a beer at first, your individual choice should and will be respected.

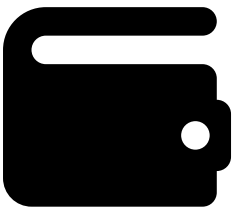
And if you do drink alcohol, remember how to get home, and that driving a car while intoxicated is illegal in Denmark.

In general, it’s a good thing to know your alcohol limits and have your bus route and the number for a cab service written down, alongside with your address (if you haven’t gotten a yellow CPR card yet). This way you can always make your way home safely. Denmark is a very safe country, but please do use common sense and exert caution when going out in a new city while under the influence of alcohol. Keep an eye on your belongings and your drink, and let your friends know when you are leaving the party and with whom. This way no one has to worry.

# DO MORE SPEND LESS

– the smart student's guide to a good life in Denmark

Living in Denmark can be DAMN (pardon us) expensive if you're not used to being a little budget or money savvy. Here are some tips on how to save money, but still have a fun and social student life:



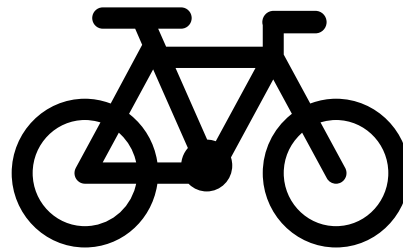
## Make a budget

This way you don't end up spending all of your money before the end of the month. Remember that you need to eat, buy books and boring things like toilet paper and light bulbs as well.

Info!

**Tips on budgeting and how to properly do so can be found here:**

[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/bank-budget](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/bank-budget)



## Bikes

Get one. Use it. Use it wisely so you don't get fined for riding dirty.

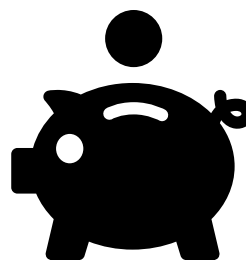


## Drinks

Don't spend all your money on expensive drinks in fancy bars. Student houses and the Friday bars are where it's at.

Danish students often meet up privately to "pre-game" before going out, which can also help to make your partying a tad more budget-friendly. Remember to check how the busses and trains run at night. Biking while intoxicated is dangerous and illegal, and taxis are expensive.

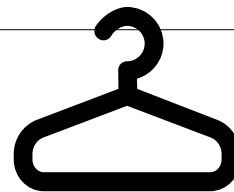
**Facebook is a great place to find info on new events and fun things to do in your new town.**



**Student discounts**  
Remember to check for student discounts – both on services, events and when shopping. Your university ID-card should cover it. Be wary of schemes trying to sell special additional student cards for you to get a discount. Ask your friends and co-students where they get their discounts.



**Dinner at home with friends**  
A budget-friendly and fun way to share a meal with your friends. You can take turns cooking or cook together. If there are communal kitchens in your city, those can be a great and cheap solution for dining out with friends as well, and even to meet new people.



**Clothes**  
If you would like to buy new, affordable clothing, one of the high street, larger chain shops would normally be your best bet. The big supermarkets in Denmark also often have special offers on well-known sports brands and other apparel, so keep an eye out for this, if that is your thing. Flea markets and online markets like trendsales.dk are also great ways to both buy new wardrobe items and to get rid of things you are not using anymore.

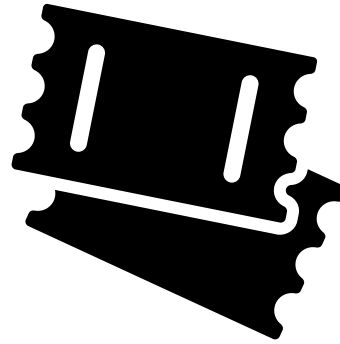
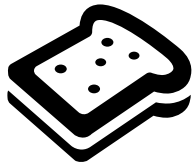


**Shopping**  
Be aware of the various price tags on the supermarkets in Denmark. The budget-friendly options like Netto, Fakta, Lidl and other “discount” shops have a great variety of goods, without the hefty price tag of the more upscale shops. If you have room for storing goods, it can also be a good solution to buy larger amounts of groceries when the shops have “special offers” and bargains. Just don’t buy too many perishable goods, as you then risk that they go bad before you can consume it.

## Packed lunch

Buying lunch at university or in the city might lead to empty pockets very quickly. Start bringing a packed lunch instead.

Danish kids grow up eating packed lunches throughout their educational upbringings, and there is nothing socially awkward in bringing your own food. Homemade sandwiches, salads (get some sturdy plastic boxes for this), and leftover dinner all make for great options.

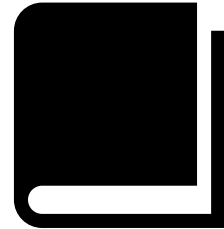


## Volunteer for experiences

One way to experience fun and interesting things while being a student is to volunteer at festivals, cultural events and local volunteer-run concert venues. This way you don't have to pay the entry fee, you will get a diverse amount of work experience and meet new friends, all while getting to attend events that would otherwise be outside of your budget. Often at times, there are goodie bags, after parties, drink vouchers, food or other benefits for being a volunteer, so it's a big win for the financially-challenged student who still want to have fun!

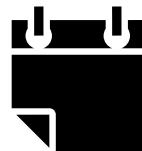
## Books

Books for your classes can prove to be a substantial cut into the Danish university student's finances. Always check out whether students, who have already taken the class, might be selling their old books. It is often still the same edition, at of course a lower price. You should also consider selling your textbook once you have passed the course to recover some, if not all, of the initial cost. Also check if the books you need are available via online shops or for an e-reader if you have one. Remember to factor in the shipping costs and to buy the books within the EU region, so you don't risk high tax and toll costs.



## Free events

There are usually a wide and interesting variety of free cultural and social events in all of the big university cities in Denmark. Keep an eye on your local newspaper, posters and flyers at the university and local student house and follow the various groups that share and post links to free events in your area.



# GETTING A STUDENT JOB

## Work in Denmark

A great percentage of Danish university students have student jobs. Though it might not be your first task to get one immediately upon arrival, if you plan to stay here for more than one semester, it's a good idea to consider getting a student job.

However, it can be difficult to find a job if you do not speak Danish. Many people find jobs through their personal networks, so making Danish and international friends in Denmark could already be a huge first step. As the competition for student jobs in Denmark is quite tough, it's best to plan your finances so that you will be able to support yourself without a job for the first semester.

## CAN I WORK IN DENMARK?

**Nordic, EU/EEA or Swiss citizens** are allowed to work in Denmark under EU rules regarding the free movement of people and services. There is no minimum or maximum number of hours that you can work. If you are an EU citizen working in Denmark, you might be able to apply for SU.

You have to work a certain minimum amount of hours at your job to be eligible to receive SU. If you do get SU, then there is a limit to how much you are allowed to earn per year.

**Non-EU/EEA/Swiss citizens** are allowed to work up to 20 hours a week and full-time during June, July and August.

However, you must first secure a work permit. You can apply for a work permit when you apply for your residence permit, or you can apply at the Danish Immigration Service later. You will receive your work permit as a sticker in your passport.

In either case, talk to your local International Citizen Service if you have any questions and follow their instructions. When it comes to following the rules for employment as an international, it's always better to be safe than sorry.

**Please note:** *If you work illegally in Denmark - for example by working more than 20 hours a week as a non-EU/EEA student – the Danish Immigration Service can revoke your residence permit or refuse to extend it.*

*This puts you at risk for deportation.*

Both you and your employer can also risk a prison sentence or substantial fines if you are caught working illegally. So make sure that you have your affairs in order before accepting a job.

Info!

[www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming\\_to\\_dk/work/work.htm](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/work/work.htm)



# WHAT KIND OF JOBS CAN YOU GET AS A STUDENT?

**RESTAURANTS, CAFES, BARS AND HOTELS** will often be open to employing international students who don't speak Danish. Some retail stores will also employ international students.

You might be able to find a job with a company that needs someone with your native language skills or insider knowledge of your home culture. This could be a job in the tourist industry, or with a company that caters to people from your background. It could also be with a Danish company conducting business with companies from your country, or someone about to launch a product in your home country. Translating assignments can also be a good option for employment.

If you like to write, you might be able to get a job at an English speaking newspaper or online media outlet.

We know that you would probably prefer to find a job related to your field of study or previous experiences, but please remember that this can be difficult even for Danish students. Getting Danish work experience in other fields first might make it easier to get the more attractive student jobs in the future.

Campus jobs are difficult to find and many of them require Danish language skills. You could be lucky and find a position as a research assistant, instructor or administrative assistant within an international program. The universities will post job openings on their online *jobbanks*.

**For all kinds of job applications:**

You need a CV (aka a résumé) and a cover letter.

Whatever job you apply to, remember to read and supply the info they want, in the form they want it. If they request that you send your application to a specific email address, do this and only this. If there’s an online form, use that one, and don’t send an email.

This is the first step to ensure that your application actually gets considered.

**CV:**

It is common to add a photo to your CV in Denmark. Choose one that’s neutral, recognisable and not a blurry Facebook selfie.

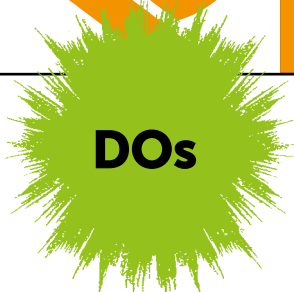
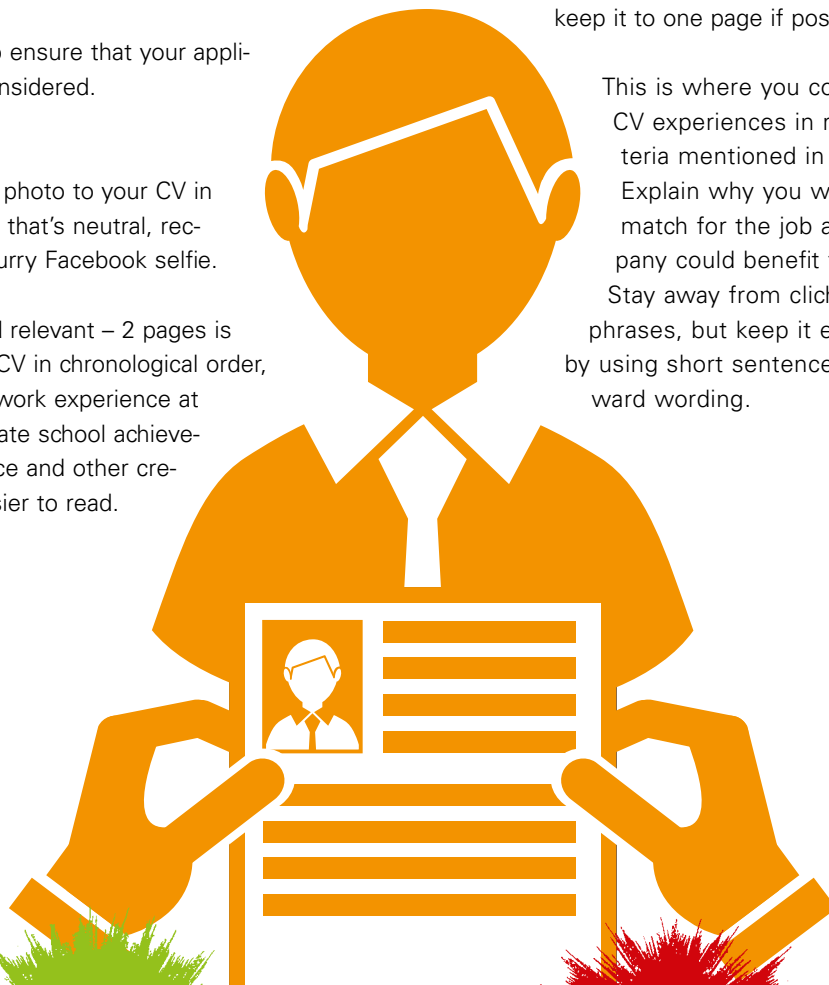
Keep the CV short and relevant – 2 pages is plenty. Organise your CV in chronological order, with the most recent work experience at the top. You can separate school achievements, work experience and other credentials to make it easier to read.

Modify your CV so that it is relevant to the job that you are applying for. For example, rather than mention your first prize in a high school math competition in your application for a job at a café, highlight your past experience as a barista for a non-profit café.

**Cover letter:**

Keep it targeted, relevant and easy to read. Try to keep it to one page if possible.

This is where you contextualize your CV experiences in relation to the criteria mentioned in the job posting. Explain why you would be a good match for the job and how the company could benefit from hiring you. Stay away from clichés and standard phrases, but keep it easy to understand by using short sentences and straightforward wording.



- › Figure out how the workplace could benefit from hiring you - Focus on that!
- › Remember to do a spell check or get someone to read and correct your CV and cover letter for you.
- › Make it personal enough so that they remember you.

- › Send out the same letter to everyone.
- › Talk about how awesome you are without relating it to the job you’re applying for.
- › Write several pages.
- › Write about your personal life too much.
- › Forget to put in contact details



# WHERE DO YOU FIND A JOB?

There are several different strategies you can follow when looking for a job. Try to use a combination of these methods rather than solely relying on one way to do it.

## Hand out your CV in stores and cafes/bars/restaurants

Many international students choose to print out their CV and pass it out in stores and bars/cafes in the city in which they live. However, before you hand a random staff member your CV, make sure to ask them how to apply for a job. Many brand stores or cafés have an online system for job applications, and a CV on paper handed to the staff might not reach the people in charge of hiring.

## Social media

LinkedIn is very popular in Denmark. Make sure that you have an updated profile to provide potential employers with a good sense of your background and skills. Make sure to check for spelling mistakes and typos.

You can find many groups for internationals looking for jobs on Facebook. These will often have job postings from smaller work places.

## Ask people you know

Many jobs are never posted as a job ad. Often times, people find jobs through their own personal network, so ask your friends, your classmates, or other students if they know of any places that are hiring. Let people know what kind of experience you have, so that they will keep you in mind if something opens up. You can also let your network know through social media that you are looking for a job.

## Check the companies' websites

Positions in retail, bars and hotels are not always posted in online job banks, but might be posted on the company website. Larger chains in particular will usually have postings listed on their websites as well as information on whether they accept unsolicited applications.

You can also send unsolicited applications to smaller companies; include a short description of how you could help the company if hired.

## Online job banks

At [jobbank.dk](http://jobbank.dk) you can find student jobs, internships and full-time positions; there are also many ways to specify your search. On the bottom of the page, you will find a link to your university's job bank. Universities usually post campus jobs here. If you speak Danish, use the Danish sites first because they will have more openings.

Moment.dk is one of several job-pages that post student jobs and short time employment opportunities, often as temps or for event work.

# TAXES

## (SKAT)

**IF YOU HAVE** a paid job, you have to pay taxes. Simple as that. It is a crime to not pay your taxes, both for you and for the work place.

Most work places report the salary directly to SKAT, so it will be automatically deducted from your salary each month. Most jobs in Denmark will pay you by the end of each month, but it might vary. Remember to ask how it works at your job and if they report the taxes.

If they don't, you have to report it yourself and pay what SKAT has calculated that you owe them. You do this online via skat.dk in the form called "årsopgørelse".

You pay around 40-45% in various taxes even as a student, so remember to include the taxes in your budget – 100 dkk per hour salary is not 100 dkk for you to spend.

The taxes go towards paying for free education, health-care etc. in Denmark, so it's considered a very good thing, even though it can feel annoying to see your pay cheque cut in half.

If you have any questions regarding your taxes, you can find the address of your nearest tax office at [www.skat.dk](http://www.skat.dk)

### What is a tax card?

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**Source:**

[www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/working-in-denmark/taxes](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/working-in-denmark/taxes)

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If you have a salaried job in Denmark you must apply for a tax card from your local tax office. A tax card is the official document that tells you how much tax you have to pay.

Once you have gotten your CPR number you can contact SKAT and inform them how much you expect to earn in the calendar year. Then they'll help you get a tax card. Your employer will get your tax card digitally from SKAT once they have reported your income.



# UNIONS

**A TRADE UNION** provides you with the support and guidance you may need – and negotiates collectively to secure the best possible working conditions. This means that being a member of a trade union is common in Denmark and can help you with any needed services.

Your general terms of employment are in many cases regulated by collective agreements made by the trade unions and employer associations.

The trade union offers you guidance and legal support on important issues such as your individual employment contract, your salary and matters like work-related injuries or rehabilitation.

If you are starting an on-going job, always get a contract. At the very least, you should get something in writing regarding specific aspects of your job such as the expected tasks, your terms of employment and your salary.

This shows that both you and your place of employment are committed. Furthermore, the document provides you with something to show the union if there are problems.

There is no law regarding minimum wages in Denmark, so the collective agreements are important.

If your work place does not follow the collective agreement (either by joining it or by following the guidelines in them), they can pay you as little or as much as they want.

Make sure your hourly wage is specified in the contract, and ask your union or google what the hourly rate is normally for the job in question.

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## Source:

[www.workindenmark.dk/Working-in-DK/Trade-unions](http://www.workindenmark.dk/Working-in-DK/Trade-unions)

[www.workindenmark.dk/Working-in-DK/Employment-contract](http://www.workindenmark.dk/Working-in-DK/Employment-contract)

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It is very cheap or sometimes even free to be a student member of a union. Pick the union most relevant to your field of study or your current work. Unions usually offer discounts on insurance and more, and they can even help you to write a CV and cover letter

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**Tip!**

## TIPS ON TIPS:

Denmark doesn't have a tipping culture, so though employees in service jobs might receive them, tips should never constitute the basis of the salary or be used as a legitimate supplement to a low hourly wage.

Most service area employees will share their tips or have a "tipping jar", so be sure to check the tipping culture at your place of employment before pocketing the money for yourself.

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# DANISH WORK CULTURE

**DANISH WORK CULTURE** is often pretty relaxed and informal. It's normal to call your superiors by first name, especially if they introduce themselves to you using their first name. Collaboration and teamwork is the norm, and it is not seen as a good quality to "step on others to get ahead." A healthy work-life balance is valued in Denmark, so you will rarely get extra points for working extra or overtime. It's a work smarter, not harder culture, and even your boss might call in sick, leave work early to pick up their kids or take a few days off once in a while.

If you are in doubt about anything, it's perfectly okay to ask a colleague you trust for tips.

Ask about sick leave, work hours and vacation policies when you start the job, so you're sure to follow your workplace's protocol.

## How to dress for a job:

Most Danish workplaces (where you don't wear a uniform) don't have a specific dress code. In general, the Danes dress stylish but casual, so jeans are normally accepted, and ties and suits are not required.

If you are in doubt, watch and take a cue from how your Danish colleagues dress.

Info!

### Links to more info

[www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming\\_to\\_dk](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk)  
[www.workindenmark.dk/en](http://www.workindenmark.dk/en)

### Jobportals in English:

[www.jobbank.dk/en](http://www.jobbank.dk/en)  
[www.jobindex.dk/cgi/user/english.cgi](http://www.jobindex.dk/cgi/user/english.cgi)

### Work and life in Denmark

(publication from [www.workindenmark.dk](http://www.workindenmark.dk))

[www.workindenmark.dk/~media/Workindenmark/Publicationer/WIDK-avis-web-280214.ashx](http://www.workindenmark.dk/~media/Workindenmark/Publicationer/WIDK-avis-web-280214.ashx)

### Guide on how to start up your own business in Denmark

[www.investindk.com/~media/Files/Sheets/Framework%20conditions/step\\_by\\_step\\_guide\\_WEB.ashx](http://www.investindk.com/~media/Files/Sheets/Framework%20conditions/step_by_step_guide_WEB.ashx)

## HOW TO ASK YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT JOBS?

Don't expect them to GET you a job, but it's completely acceptable to ask your friends for advice, tips and information.

### Good questions to ask:

Where did you find your job?

If you see a student job, can you let me know about it?

Have you heard about places hiring at the moment?

How did you get your student jobs?

Do you know any places that are looking for student employees?

If your friend's job sounds interesting and the workplace is looking for more people, it's okay to ask your friend how to apply. If there aren't any openings, you can also ask them to tell you if something turns up.

Don't expect them to be able to secure you a job just because you're friends.

# HISTORY

**THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK** is one of the oldest unified countries in the world. The word 'Denmark' dates

back to the Viking age and is carved on the famous Jelling Stone from around 900 AD.

Info!

Read more about the history of Denmark here:

[www.denmark.dk/en/society/history](http://www.denmark.dk/en/society/history)

[www.denmark.dk/en/~media/Denmark/Documents/Society/History-2003-en.pdf](http://www.denmark.dk/en/~media/Denmark/Documents/Society/History-2003-en.pdf)

# THE DANISH SOCIETY

Info!

Read more about the topics at

[www.denmark.dk/en/society](http://www.denmark.dk/en/society)

**DENMARK IS KNOWN** internationally for our welfare state and the social system build around this.

The basic principle of the Danish welfare system, often also referred to as the Scandinavian welfare model, is that all citizens have equal right to social security. Within the Danish welfare system, a number of services are available to citizens free of charge. The Danish welfare model is subsidised by the state, and as a result, Denmark has high tax rates compared to

many other countries. However, if you factor in that healthcare, education and social security services are all free, it somewhat levels out the costs related to this.

The equal access to health and social security services as well as both primary and secondary education has resulted in an equal and relatively socially mobile society, where the majority of the population can be defined as middle class.

# DANISH MODEL AND FLEXICURITY

**WHEN PEOPLE TALK** about the Danish labour market they often use the term "flexicurity" to describe the model. Flexicurity is a word made out of flexibility and security, describing the compounds of the concept.

One side is flexible rules in regards to hiring and firing staff, which make it easier for the employers to scale down during slow times and hire new staff when things improve. The second part is the unemployment security, in the form of guaranteed unemployment benefits.

The aim of this system is to promote employment security over job security, which means that in Denmark, people are less afraid of losing their jobs and are not constantly looking for new or other employment, as is the case in many other countries.

The Danish model for the labour market is built on a century-long tradition of negotiations between the various partners. The trade unions and the employers' associations negotiate the collective agreements for each field of work, ensuring worker rights while also taking production and market conditions into account.

# POLITICAL SYSTEM



## Folketinget

[www.thedanishparliament.dk](http://www.thedanishparliament.dk)

The political landscape in Denmark is a multi-party system, where several parties are represented in the parliament, which is called Folketinget (the People's Assembly). Folketinget resides at Christiansborg, the parliament building in central Copenhagen.

Danish governments often represent a minority coalition, aided by one or more supporting parties. This means that Danish politics are based on consensus-driven decisions and negotiations with all parties in the Folketinget. Since 1909, no single party has solely held or monopolised the majority.

The Constitution (Grundloven aka the Founding Law) from

1849 sets the framework of Danish democracy. The law outlines the citizens' and human rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

Folketinget is the legislative assembly in Denmark, which means that it passes the laws that apply in Denmark. Folketinget is also responsible for adopting the state's budgets, approving the state's accounts, exercising control of the government and taking part in international cooperation.

There are 179 Members of Parliament (MPs), 175 are elected in Denmark, two are elected in the Faeroe Islands and two in Greenland. Together with Denmark, the Faeroes and Greenland constitute the Unity of the Realm. Both territories have extensive home-rule and their own flags, languages and culture, but are still represented by Folketinget.

## Municipalities and local government

Denmark is divided into 98 municipalities (kommuner) and five regions (regioner) that each cover several municipalities.

Each municipality (and region) has their own publicly elected council that governs and administers the individual municipality. All local councillors are elected for a four-year period in local government elections.

## Denmark and EU

Denmark has been a member of the European Union since 1973.

We have four opt-outs from European Union policies in relation to security and defence, citizenship, police and justice, and the adoption of the euro. The Danish government has held several referendums on modifying its opt-outs, but so far all attempts have been unsuccessful.

## Elections

There are three types of elections in Denmark: elections to the national parliament (Folketinget), local elections to the municipal and regional councils, and elections to the European Parliament. Furthermore, there are national referendums on topics directly related to issues of national concern.

## The monarchy

Yes. Denmark is a monarchy... and actually one of the oldest in the world, dating back to at least 958 AD. Right now the monarch is Queen Margaret the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Her son Frederik, who will become King Frederik the 10<sup>th</sup>, will succeed her.

However, Denmark has been a constitutional monarchy since 1849, and over the years the political power of the reigning monarch have been reduced, and now they only have a ritual position in regards to the political decisions. The prime minister will have to present their government and law suggestions for a formal approval, but these actions are ceremonial and do not have real political value.

In 2015 more than 80% of the Danes are still supportive of the monarchy, but more and more are debating how much funding the distant relatives of the royal family deserve to receive.

## Can I vote?

International students from the Nordic and EU-countries can vote at the municipal and regional elections. All other international students must have lived in Denmark at least three years before they are eligible to vote at these elections.

Only Danish citizens can vote in the elections for Folketinget and the national referendums.



# EDUCATION



## Education for all

Education in Denmark is compulsory for everyone between the ages of 6-7 and 15-16. A public school, private school or home school can provide the education. It is education that is compulsory, not school. More than 50% of graduating students go on to a higher education.

## School life in Denmark

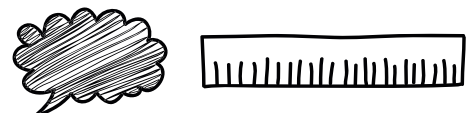
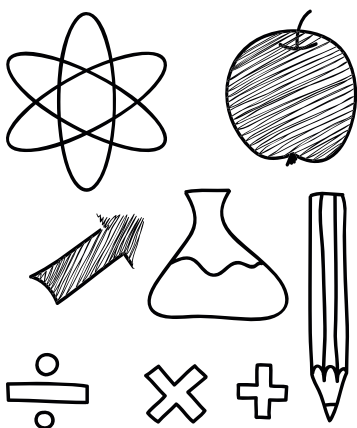
It's normal for kids to go into some kind of day-care from around the age of one. From that age kids are in day-care, then kindergarten and then primary school, which is called folkeskole in Denmark. Folkeskole is made up of one year of pre-school class, nine years of primary and lower secondary education and an optional one-year 10th form.

After the mandatory 9 years, the 9th or 10th graders can choose to continue into a high school level institution such as a gymnasium and trade schools, or into a vocational school or apprenticeship for various business areas. After 3 years of a gymnasium level education, you are eligible to apply to other educations such as university, professional bachelor degrees, technical and business schools etc.



## Teaching style

Students at Danish institutions are encouraged to play an active role in their learning process and take responsibility for carrying out projects independently or in small groups. In addition to attending classes, students are expected to participate in discussions and continuously develop their critical and analytical skills.







# DANISH CULTURE CRASH COURSE

**DENMARK HAS BEEN** a unified country for more than a millennium, and had very limited immigration from outside cultures until the latter half of the 20th century. This means that, culturally speaking, the Danes are a close-knit tribe with a very homogenous population, sharing a common culture and similar characteristics.

Some of these cultural characteristics might be different from what you are used to in your home-country's culture, and it might seem like the Danes are less polite and more inefficient or just weird.

One of the things that are noteworthy about the Danish culture is the lack of formal hierarchy.

You might notice that it is common for people in positions of authority to introduce themselves by first name,

for your professors to be open to discussions with the students, and for people to treat you equally regardless of your financial or societal status. This is all rooted in the egalitarian worldview that is the basis for most Danish social conventions and interactions.

You are not considered more "important" as an individual, just because your formal role is more important.

This means that it is normal for employees on all levels to give input during work situations. If the point is valid and presented well, it will be considered, no matter whether it comes from the manager or the intern. This is a result of the Danish culture valuing consensus, and preferring to base decisions on this. It is not seen as admirable for a manager or a professor to come up with solutions based solely on their own opinions. Instead

they will be applauded for including their subordinates or students in the decision making process.

The Danish work culture heralds the concept popularly known as the “work/life balance,” and having a life outside your work or studies is seen as a commendable thing. Most Danes are members of various volunteer organisations (called foreninger) and time off, whether being after the workday, work week or as vacation time, is secured in most employment contracts. Working way more than the standard 37 hours per week might be perceived as ‘dedicated’ in other work cultures, but will in most Danish work places be seen as unhealthy or even unproductive, due to the lack of time to rest and wind down.

One of the aspects of this cultural value is seen in how Danes think about calling in sick. Yes, of course you should not call in sick for silly reasons (hangovers being one of those), but if you have the flu or are sick in any other way, you are supposed to call in sick and stay home if possible. No one will praise you for passing on the flu to the rest of the class or your entire office. Trust us on this one.

A last cultural aspect that is worth mentioning is that the

Danish society is a very individualistically oriented one. The concept of the welfare state might make you think otherwise, but in general the Danes primarily identify as individuals and mainly feel responsible for their own and closest family’s matters. You might notice that people don’t talk much about belonging to a certain ethnicity, religion or region, or that they are mainly concerned with their own schedules and calendars when planning activities. This cultural aspect can also help you to understand why your Danish classmates don’t approach you if they see you on the bus or in a supermarket. Your (and their) individual privacy will be considered important, and many Danes would rather not impose on people in public if they don’t know them very well.

The lack of formal hierarchy combined with the individualistic worldview often makes the Danes communicate in a very direct way. They don’t feel the need to include titles or polite introductions when addressing people, and the respect for people’s individual time and privacy will lead to most Danes not engaging in small talk with people they don’t already know.

*If you’re curious about how to actually talk to your Danish classmates, jump to “Meeting the Danes.”*



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[www.denmark.dk/en/lifestyle](http://www.denmark.dk/en/lifestyle)

[www.denmark.dk/en/society/history](http://www.denmark.dk/en/society/history)

[www.commisceo-global.com/country-guides/denmark-guide](http://www.commisceo-global.com/country-guides/denmark-guide)

[www.studyindenmark.dk/why-denmark/quality-of-life-1/the-happiest-place-on-earth](http://www.studyindenmark.dk/why-denmark/quality-of-life-1/the-happiest-place-on-earth)

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## Jantelov

Jantelov, known in English as The Law of Jante, is a cultural concept and a literary reference from Aksel Sandemose’s 1933 novel *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*.

Jantelov is used to describe the mentality of the small village people in the novel, but is often also used to explain the anti-elitist Danish mentality as a whole.

It is primarily used as a negative descriptor of the national mentality, often by people feeling martyred by Danish societal values.

While it might hold certain amounts of truth (few Danes will praise bragging as an attractive personal trait for instance), it is important to remember that it is not a codex for behaviour in Denmark.

It is a cultural phenomenon from the past that pops its head up every now and then – and that most younger Danes rarely think about or adhere to.

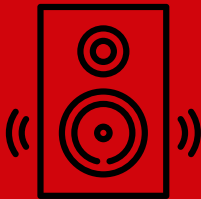
## Things invented by Danes:



LEGO



ARTIFICIAL INSULIN



THE LOUDSPEAKER

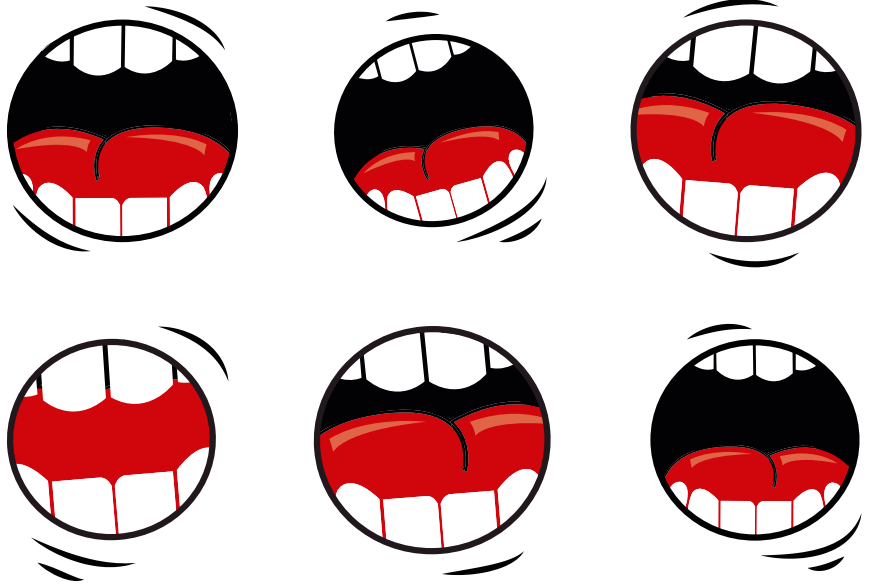


CARLSBERG YEAST



THE BAND AQUA

## Danish tongue breakers:



THE CLASSIC:

**Rødgrød med fløde**  
(Fruit porridge with cream)

WORST ONE EVER:

**Rådden, rødøjet, røget ørred**  
(Rotten, red-eyed, smoked trout...)

Not even the Danes can say this one without dying a little

OTHER FUN ONES:

**Bispens gipsgebis**  
(the bishop's plaster dentures)

**Jeg plukker frugt med en brugt frugtplukker**

Almost all Danes speak a functional English and are willing to do so, so if in need, just ask.

Strangely enough the Danish hesitation to speak with strangers does not include helping someone asking for directions or information. Just don't expect them to then want to talk about personal matters as well.

[www.universitypost.dk/article/top-10-strange-danish-expressions](http://www.universitypost.dk/article/top-10-strange-danish-expressions)

# PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN DENMARK

A lot of these are old Catholic holidays that aren't celebrated to a great extent in neither the Danish Church nor civil life. Easter and Christmas are the big religious holidays, and the period between Easter and Midsummer there are a long list of religious and public holidays.

## **New Year's Day – January 1st. (Nytårsdag)**

Everything is grey and quiet. Shops are closed. Do it like a Dane: Eat takeout and watch the ski jumping competition on TV.

## **Easter: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Monday. (Påske: Skærtorsdag, Langfredag, Påskedag)**

Do it like a Dane: Many people take the entire week leading up to Easter off. By taking those three days off from work, you end up having a whole week free for vacation.

## **General Prayer Day (Store Bededag)**

A Friday between Easter and Ascension Day. Do it like a Dane: Eat "hot wheat buns" (varme hveder) on the Thursday evening and enjoy the long weekend. Traditionally the buns were made to be warmed on the prayer day, since you were not supposed to work or cook on this day.

## **Ascension Day (Kristi Himmelfartsdag)**

Falls on a Thursday – dates vary depending on Easter. Do it like a Dane: Take the Friday off too, and enjoy a long weekend before the exams kick in.

## **Constitution Day – 5th of June (Grundlovsdag)**

Not everyone celebrates this day, which is the date the first constitution was signed. Some political groups celebrate with gatherings and speeches. Do it like Danish students: This is when the race towards the exam kicks in, so you probably won't notice.

## **Whit Monday – Pinsedag**

A Monday in May/June (again depending on Easter). Do it like a Dane: Either read up for your exams – or have a party on the Sunday before, stay up late and hope to see "the Whit Monday sun dance".

## **Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day**

In Denmark we celebrate Christmas on the 24th of December in the evening and the two following days are public holidays, normally spent with family and good food.

Do it like a Dane: Get a Christmas tree, eat roast port or

duck, rice and almond pudding called Risalamande and drink Gløgg (Danish mulled wine).

Learn to make Danish paper decorations like braided hearts and paper stars and remember to set aside almost all weekends from late November for the long line of big traditional Danish "Christmas lunches". The Christmas lunch (julefrokost) is the traditional work/school celebration at the end of the year and is more of an evening party with buffet-style food and plenty of alcohol than a "lunch" in the actual sense of the word.

## **Other dates to remember:**

The Danish version of Mardi Gras is called Fastelavn and falls on a Sunday in February. Kids celebrate by dressing up and playing a bunch of holiday specific games and by going trick-or-treating.

Do it like a Dane: Dress up (think silly, not sexy or scary) and "beat the cat off the barrel" (slå katten af tønden) with your friends.

This is an old tradition where you fill a wooden barrel with sweets and tape a paper cat on in. Whoever breaks out the goods inside the barrel is the "king/queen of the cats".

## **May 1st: Labour Day**

Do it like a Dane: Most Danish students either don't celebrate it as a political holiday, or use it as an excuse for daytime drinking. If you're politically active, there's big meetings and parades in all the larger Danish cities.

## **Midsummer's eve – called St. Hans evening in Denmark**

Do it like a Dane: Celebrate with bonfires, singing and the old-fashioned and somewhat politically incorrect burning of a "witch" made of rags and sticks in the form of a woman.

Danish primary schools and high schools have two major weeklong breaks during the year.

The Winter Break (most often in Week 7) and the Autumn Break in Week 42. These breaks are not always included in the academic year, but if your professor has kids, they might reschedule classes to spend the vacation with them.

[www.denmark.dk/en/meet-the-danes/traditions](http://www.denmark.dk/en/meet-the-danes/traditions)



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## Expatriate blogs and fun sites about Danish culture:

*[www.howtoliveindenmark.com](http://www.howtoliveindenmark.com)*

*[www.whentoliveindenmark.tumblr.com](http://www.whentoliveindenmark.tumblr.com)*

*[www.whentoliveincopenhagen.tumblr.com](http://www.whentoliveincopenhagen.tumblr.com)*

*[www.youknowyouredanishwhen.com](http://www.youknowyouredanishwhen.com)*

*[www.universitypost.dk/article/41-reasons-why-danes-are-so-strange](http://www.universitypost.dk/article/41-reasons-why-danes-are-so-strange)*

*[www.thelocal.dk/galleries/lifestyle/top-10-signs-youve-been-in-denmark-too-long](http://www.thelocal.dk/galleries/lifestyle/top-10-signs-youve-been-in-denmark-too-long)*

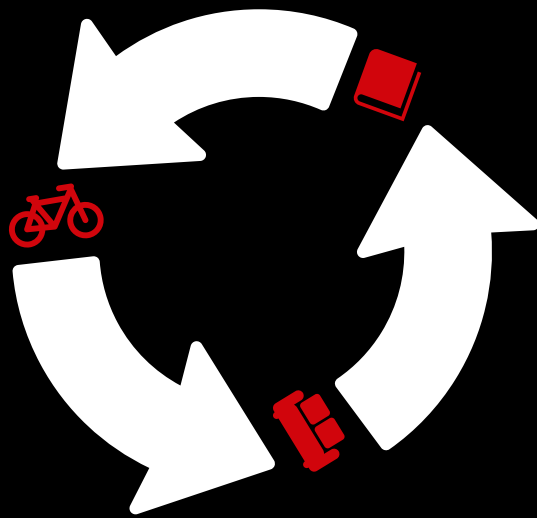
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### **Once again – welcome to Denmark and to your new life as a student here.**

We hope that you found the information you needed in the book. If you didn't or if you have additional info, tips or updates, that can help make this book even better – don't hesitate to contact us at [crew@studycph.dk](mailto:crew@studycph.dk)

If you want to contribute to making other international students' introduction to Denmark easier, get involved in your local student environment or contact us via [studycph.dk](http://studycph.dk) for more ideas.

Best of luck, take care and have fun during your stay here. We hope you will enjoy it.



**STUDYSHARE.DK**

Student to student online market

**ARE YOU LOOKING** for a one-stop page, where you can buy all the things you need during your stay in Denmark?

Studyshare is a new online market place where all students can buy or sell books, bicycles, furniture, travel guides and any other article that is vital for a good student life in Denmark!

This means you can forget all about the sometimes chaotic and time-consuming Facebook groups and join the other students at [studyshare.dk](http://studyshare.dk). Who knows; you might even befriend a Dane in the process!

Studyshare is owned by the student unions in Denmark and operated as a non-profit venture leading a potential profit back to the students. It's clearly a win-win situation compared to the commercial online markets out there!

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Info!

[www.studyshare.dk](http://www.studyshare.dk)

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