

International Student's Survival Guide to Life in Denmark



***by*Students**

Edition 1–7 made in collaboration with the National Union of Students in Denmark (Danske Studerendes Fællesråd).

Author: Stine Agerbæk, Simone Hauskov, Jacob Ørum & Lucius Matthiesen

Content Contributors: Lena K. Hansen and Natasha Jessen-Petersen

Frontpage: Andreas Grønning Poulsen

Other photos: byStudents, Unsplash.com and Denmark.dk

Design: Peter Vittrup

10th edition, March 2026

Print: Stenby Tryk A/S

Please note: At the time of publication, all links are working. If you stumble upon a link that isn't working, a mistake or missing information, please let us know via e-mail, thanks

Send an e-mail to contact@bystudents.dk

Content

Chapter 1: Welcome

- 04 Welcome to Denmark
- 05 Culture Shock

Chapter 2: Denmark

- 09 Denmark at a Glance!
- 11 Transportation
Getting Around Town
- 12 Things to See and Do in Your University City

Chapter 3: Getting started

- 16 Getting Started in Denmark
- 18 Getting a CPR-Number
CS and SIRI in Aalborg, Aarhus, Odense
and Copenhagen
- 19 Opening a Bank Account in Denmark
SU
- 20 Phones and Internet
- 21 Transport
- 22 Healthcare
- 23 Dentists and Extra Healthcare Services
- 24 Insurance,
MitID and Digital Denmark..
- 25 Family, Children, and Pets
Students with disabilities
We hate to see you leave, but...

Chapter 4: Student life

- 28 Student Life
Being a Student
Libraries
- 29 Practical University Info
- 30 Life Outside University
- 32 Do More - Spend less
- 33 A more sustainable student life

Chapter 5: Housing

- 36 Housing
How to Find a Place to Live
- 38 Housing Options
Furniture
- 50 How to Avoid Housing Scams

Chapter 6: Meeting the danes

- 44 Meeting the Danes
- 45 Meeting People at the Univeristy
- 46 How to Get Involved
- 47 Danish Friends...
- 48 Timeliness
- 50 Dating in Denmark
Explore your city
- 52 Going out

Chapter 7: Student job

- 56 Getting a Student Job
What Kind of Jobs Can You Get as a
Student?
- 57 Where Do You Find a Job?
CV and cover letters
- 58 Danish Work Culture
- 59 More work info
Unemployment Insurance Fund
- 61 Unions
Taxes (SKAT)

Chapter 8: History & culture

- 64 Danish History & Society
- 65 Political System
- 66 Education
- 67 Danish Culture Crash Course
- 68 Public Holidays in Denmark
- 69 Blogs and Fun Sites about Danish culture

Welcome to Denmark

YOU'VE DECIDED TO STUDY IN DENMARK, and for that, we salute you! We hope you'll enjoy your stay.

Adjusting to a new country and city can be challenging, and yes, Danes can be a little weird at times. This guide will give you tips, insights, and background information to help you get the most out of your student life in Denmark.

Each chapter includes useful information, practical tips, fun (and less fun) facts about Denmark, and links to even more resources. While this book isn't comprehensive, we've tried to cover as much ground as possible to help you handle challenges on your own, because that's always more useful than a quick fix.

If you're unsure about something, our best advice is simple: Ask a Dane!

Your classmates can help you navigate your university's intranet, set up MitID, or find a good bike — things no guidebook explains as well as locals can. The best cultural knowledge comes from meeting people, so don't be afraid to ask questions.

Before arriving, check whether your university offers pre-semester introduction events or language classes. We highly recommend joining if they do, as it's the best way to get started here.

We hope you'll have fun, learn a lot, and enjoy your time as a student in Denmark.

For more information about studying in Denmark:

www.studyindenmark.dk

Greetings from byStudents!

byStudents works to improve student life across Copenhagen and Denmark by focusing on community, engagement, and city life.

Students are at the heart of byStudents. Our board is made up of students, our projects are developed in collaboration with students, and it's students who give meaning to everything we do.

We believe student life improves when everyone has access to meaningful communities, opportunities to engage with the world around them, and a city that welcomes all, both newcomers and long-timers alike.

byStudents is for every student, regardless of institution, field, or interest. Join us and be part of the community.



byStudents

You're not alone! (Even when you might feel like it)

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

Surveys show that about one in four international students in Denmark experience loneliness during their stay. And it's not just internationals — about one in six Danish students also report feeling lonely at university.

This can be due to the fragmented university structure and the lack of central social spaces.

If you want to change that, there are plenty of ways to get involved at your university, in your city, or through your local Student House (Studentarhus).

See chapter 6 for more ideas



Culture shock

ARRIVING IN A NEW COUNTRY can bring both practical and personal challenges, and some even describe it as experiencing "culture shock."

Although Denmark is well-organised and people are eager to help you feel at home, it still takes time to settle in. There may be moments when you question why you left home, and that's perfectly normal.

Remember, this is part of a learning process, and many of your fellow students feel the same way. By viewing this short adaptation period as a chance to grow, you'll return home with greater confidence and stronger skills for navigating life in a multicultural environment.

Here are some tips on easing yourself into a new culture

- 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. Sharing your feelings and worries is one of the best ways to handle loneliness or homesickness.
- Stay active by getting involved in nearby clubs (foreninger), or by joining a sports team
- Try to learn some Danish.
- Some of your Danish classmates are probably also new to the city. Why not explore it together?

www.studyindenmark.dk



Chapter 2

Facts about Denmark

Denmark

HOME OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN, Tivoli, LEGO, beer, pastries and *hygge*.

At first glance, it's easy to see Denmark as a small, charming country known for fairytales and tourist attractions... unless you arrive in January. Then you'll notice the grey, rainy, and cold weather, and the crazy Danes who still bike to class through snow and rain.

Denmark is many things, and we hope you'll discover plenty of them during your stay.

Geography

Denmark consists of the Jutland (Danish: *Jylland*) peninsula and 443 named islands connecting Northern Europe and Scandinavia via the Øresund Bridge.

Copenhagen (Danish: *København*), the capital, is on the largest island, Zealand (Danish: *Sjælland*). Funen (Danish: *Fyn*), a slightly smaller island, lies between Zealand and Jutland.

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



Danish demography

Denmark has nearly 6 million inhabitants. Copenhagen is the largest city with over 1.3 million people, followed by Aarhus (approx. 290,000), Odense (approx. 180,000) and Aalborg (approx. 120,000).

Most Danes belong to the middle class, and there's relatively little difference between living conditions compared to many other Western countries.

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

All Danish children must complete at least nine years of education, usually until age 15 or 16, resulting in a 99% literacy rate.

Government-funded education is free and open to all, and about 60% of Danes between 15 and 69 have higher-level education.

Climate

Denmark's temperate coastal climate means generally mild weather, rarely too hot or too cold. Winters usually range between 0 and -10°C.

The weather is famously changeable, with sun, wind, and rain often on the same day. Expect wonderful sunny days, grey days, and some that feel like you'll be blown away. Get rainboots, a raincoat, a big scarf, and remember that layers work best all year round.

Because Denmark lies far north, winter days are short (about 9–16 hours of daylight around the solstice) while summer brings long, bright nights. This means plenty of indoor *hygge* in winter and outdoor fun in summer.



Religion

Religious freedom is a constitutional right in Denmark. The country's official state religion is Christianity, represented by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark (*Dansk Folkekirke*). In this sense, Denmark is not a secular state, though atheism and many other religions are also present.

Religion is rarely discussed in politics or public life, and most Danes prefer to keep their beliefs private, so it's best not to bring it up as the first topic when meeting new people.

Islam is the second-largest religion, having grown since the 1980s through immigration. You can also find Jewish, Muslim, and various Christian congregations in the larger cities if you'd like to get involved.



Language Courses

Most Danish universities offer tuition-free Danish language courses for exchange students, either as pre-semester classes or early in the semester.

A deposit of around 2,000 DKK is usually required, which will be refunded once you complete the course. Check with your International Office or Student Hub if language courses aren't mentioned in your admission package. Short intensive courses are often offered just before the semester starts.

If you'd like to continue studying Danish, both public and private centres offer language courses. Contact your local Citizen Service Centre for details, and remember to ask about tuition fees and deposit requirements when signing up.

Read more

The Danish language centre: www.dedanskesprogcentre.dk/english/

From the Danish public portal: www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk/leisure-and-networking/Danish-language-training

Copenhagen language centre: www.studieskolen.dk/en/dansk/kobenhavns-sprogcenter

Transportation and getting around town

IN MOST DANISH CITIES, biking, walking, and public transportation are all you need to get around. As we've already mentioned, Danes bike everywhere and in all kinds of weather.

If you have only just learned how to ride a bike upon coming to Denmark, be careful with learning the rules of the road, so that you don't hurt yourself or others. In some Danish cities, the Red Cross occasionally organises "bike schools" for foreigners.

If you know how to ride, find an affordable, reliable bike. You can buy a new one, check Facebook or www.dba.dk for used bikes, or rent one from services like www.swapfjets.dk or www.donkeyBike.dk. Ask your classmates where they got theirs.

Bikes

You'll soon discover that Danes are a biking nation. Whenever possible, they bike to work, school, leisure activities, and social events. Because cycling is such an integral part of life in Denmark, we've dedicated an entire section of this guide to it (See [Bike Culture in Chapter 6](#)).

E-Bikes and E-Scooters

E-bikes and e-scooters have become a thing in major Danish cities. They're great for short trips if you've downloaded the app for them. The same traffic rules apply as for regular bikes.

Public Transportation

In larger cities, buses, metros, and local trains tend to be reliable and efficient. Aarhus and Odense also have Light Rail (in Danish: *Letbanen*).

Across Denmark, you can travel by train (check out DSB's "Orange" discount tickets), ferries, or long-distance coaches. Use the website and app [Rejseplanen](#) ("The Travel Plan") to plan routes and view all public transport options.

You must always have a valid ticket or commuter card. Fines for travelling without one can be steep. See Chapter 3 for details on travel cards and discounts.

Outside the Cities

Outside urban areas, most people travel by car. Owning one is expensive due to high taxes, fuel prices, insurance, and parking fees, so few students have cars.

Fortunately, several services offer affordable car rentals and car-sharing options.



GoMore is a peer-to-peer car-sharing and rental platform where you can rent vehicles directly from private owners. Through the GoMore app, you'll find everything from small city cars to vans and electric models.

There's also GreenMobility, a fully electric car-sharing service currently available in Copenhagen and Aarhus. The app lets you reserve and unlock cars, drive within the service zone, and park in designated public areas. An ideal choice for flexible, eco-friendly transportation in the major cities.

Cycling Rules and Etiquette

As with everything in Denmark, there are rules to follow.

These are the most important ones:

- Always use a bike lane and keep to the right so others can overtake you.
- Use hand signals: raise your hand to stop, and always signal before turning.
- Get off your bike when crossing on footpaths or pedestrian crossings.
- Look over your left shoulder before overtaking other cyclists.
- Use your bike lights from sunset to sunrise (*lystændingstid*), not just when it seems dark. You're required to have a white light in front and a red light at the back.
- Give way to pedestrians at intersections, traffic lights, and bus stops.
- Helmets aren't mandatory, but strongly recommended.

Things to see and do in your university city

Aalborg

CARNIVAL

In the last week of May, Aalborg hosts Northern Europe's biggest carnival, with around 60,000 costumed parade participants and more than 100,000 spectators.



THE SINGING TREES

A park where international artists have planted trees that "play" their music at the push of a button.

SKAGEN

The northern-most point of Denmark is known for its spectacular nature and sand-buried church.

www.enjoynordjylland.com/aalborg

Aarhus

AROS

A huge modern art museum famous for Ron Mueck's Boy and Olafur Eliasson's *Your Rainbow Panorama*, which offers a colourful view of the city.



AARHUS FESTUGE

For 10 days in late August and early September, Aarhus comes alive with art, theatre, dance, and music during the Festival Week (*Festuge*).

BAZAR VEST

If you venture out to the western suburb of Gellerupparken, you'll find Bazar Vest. Here you can sample food, spices and groceries from all over the world in the market hall. This is the multicultural Aarhus at its finest.

www.visitaarhus.com

Odense

H.C. ANDERSEN'S HOUSE

The famous Danish writer grew up here, and there are plenty of references to his stories in the city. Visit the Fairytale Garden (*Eventyrhaven*) or join the H.C. Andersen Festival in August.

BRANDTS

Museum of Art and Visual Culture, perfect for anyone interested in art, photography, or design.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FESTIVALS

Odense plays host to many festivals, such as the Generator Festival, *Havnekulturfestival* (Harbour Culture Festival), and *Femi Festival*.

www.visitodense.com

Roskilde

ROSKILDE FESTIVAL

Scandinavia's largest music festival is extremely popular with students. In the last week of June, Roskilde welcomes 130,000 festival-goers for four days of music, food, and cultural activities.

VIGEN BEACH

North of Roskilde, you'll find Vigen Beach, a sandy haven surrounded by green meadows, perfect for swimming and relaxing.



ROSKILDE CATHEDRAL

A UNESCO World Heritage Site and architectural masterpiece where 1,000 years of Danish history rest beneath beautifully decorated vaults and in shadowy crypts.

www.visitfjordlandet.dk/en/areas/roskilde

Copenhagen

TIVOLI AND BAKKEN

The world's two oldest amusement parks, both bursting with atmosphere and fun all year round.

SUMMER BARBECUES IN THE PARKS

Use one of the many public grills in city parks. Bring your own food and drinks (open containers are allowed), and remember to clean up afterward.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FESTIVALS

From documentaries at CPH:DOX to Distortion's citywide block parties and CPH Fashion Week, Copenhagen has a festival for everyone.

www.visitcopenhagen.com



Chapter 3

Getting started in Denmark

Getting started in Denmark

THIS CHAPTER GIVES YOU AN OVERVIEW of what to do when you arrive in Denmark.

Briefly put: follow the links, check official sites, and use the instructions from the relevant authorities.

This isn't a complete checklist, but it should help you cover most essentials with minimal hassle.

VISA/residence permit for NON-EU/EAA citizens

This guide is updated yearly, but always double-check official sources as rules may change.

Before arriving, find out whether you need a visa or residence permit. If your country requires a visa and you plan to stay more than three months, you must apply for a [residence permit](#) before coming to Denmark.

Where to Apply

Submit your visa application at an authorised Danish mission in your home country.

For details, visit the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) website or contact the nearest Danish embassy or consulate.

Keep yourself updated on official websites, like the ones below:

The Danish Immigration Service official portal:

www.nyidanmark.dk/en

The Official Guide to Life in Denmark

www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk/

(You can order a health insurance card here.)

Copenhagen municipality Citizen Service:

www.international.kk.dk/

Aarhus municipality Citizen Service:

www.international.aarhus.dk/

EU/EEA or Swiss citizens

If you're an EU/EEA or Swiss citizen, you can stay in Denmark up to three months without needing a residence permit, or six months if you're working.

For longer stays, you'll need a [registration certificate](#) (EU/EEA) or a [residence card](#) (Swiss).

Nordic citizens (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland) don't need visas or permits to live, study, or work in Denmark, but they do need a [CPR-number](#).

How to Get a Registration Certificate

You can apply for both the registration certificate and residence card at the Danish Agency for Labour Retention and International Recruitment (SIRI) within three months of arriving in Denmark.

Book an appointment in advance and bring your passport, two passport photos, and your admission letter.

You can apply for both the registration certificate and residence card at the Danish Agency for Labour Retention and International Recruitment (SIRI) within three months of arriving in Denmark.

Book an appointment in advance and bring [your passport](#), [two passport photos](#), and [your admission letter](#).

Useful Links

Danish Immigration Service to apply for a visa:
www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply

Information about visa requirements from different countries:
www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/Words-and-concepts/US/Visum/Countries-with-a-visa-requirement-and-visa-free-countries

Learn about permits, visas & red tape:
www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/permits-visas-red-tape

The Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI):
www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/Contact-us/Contact-SIRI

Where to go

Copenhagen

INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE EAST Nyropsgade 1 1602 København V +45 33661000 cph@kk.dk	SIRI COPENHAGEN Carl Jacobsens Vej 39 2500 Valby
--	--

For Copenhagen and a large number of municipalities in Region Zealand and the Capital Region of Denmark

Odense

INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE SOUTH Borgernes Hus Østre Stationsvej 15 5000 Odense C +45 63756040 ics-south@odense.dk	SIRI ODENSE Borgernes Hus Østre Stationsvej 15 5000 Odense C
---	---

Aarhus*

INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE WEST DOKK1 Hack Kampmanns Plads 2 8000 Aarhus C +45 89402222 icswest@aarhus.dk	SIRI AARHUS DOKK1 Hack Kampmanns Plads 2 8000 Aarhus C
--	---

Aalborg

INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE NORTH Rantzausgade 4, 1. 9000 Aalborg +4599311530 info@ihnd.dk	SIRI AALBORG Rantzausgade 4, 1. 9000 Aalborg
--	--

How to book an appointment

You'll have to book an appointment before visiting Citizen Service or SIRI.

Use www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk/settle-in-denmark/ and www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/Contact-us or call your closest ICS centre if you have further questions

- In Aarhus, many universities host registration events on campus, so it's worth checking out if yours does. If you arrive more than a month before your course starts, you can register yourself at www.international.aarhus.dk.
- For the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI), book your appointment at www.nyidanmark.dk/en. Bring your passport (or national ID card if you're an EU citizen).
- If you live on Bornholm, SIRI has an office in Rønne at Søndre Landevej 2 (inside the airport terminal).

Getting a CPR-NUMBER

AFTER ARRIVING, one of your first priorities should be registering with the authorities to get your CPR-number (Central Person Register). This ten-digit number (your birthdate plus four digits) is required for nearly everything: visiting the doctor, opening a bank account, borrowing library books, joining a gym, or buying a SIM card.

Once you've applied, you'll receive your health insurance card ("sygesikringsbevis" or *yellow card*) within a few weeks.

Apply for your CPR-number in person at an International Citizen Service (ICS) center if you plan to stay in Denmark for more than three months (or six if you're from an EU or Nordic country).

This is what you'll need:

- Your passport or national ID card (EU/EEA/Swiss/Nordic citizens only)
- Proof of address in Denmark (e.g., a rental contract)
- A registration certificate or residence permit from SIRI

You'll need to visit the Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) to get a registration certificate before going to the ICS or Citizens' Services. If you're arriving from outside the EU or the Nordic region, you'll also need SIRI to issue a residence permit.

You need to have a place to live with a valid address, and, as mentioned above, you must have a residence permit or certificate. If you don't have a permanent address just yet, ask the staff if you can use your current one, like a hotel, hostel, or Airbnb.



International Citizen Service East
Copenhagen



International Citizen Service North
Aalborg

If you're unsure at any point in the process, ask the staff for help. They're there to assist you and are usually very supportive if you politely ask for guidance with the forms, procedures, or any specific requirements for your city or municipality.

You can also check with your university's international office or your mentor, but keep in mind they may not be aware of all the current rules and requirements.

Many educational institutions also hold special registration events on campus, so it's worth asking whether your campus has one.

We know that the "proof of address" can be the biggest hurdle to overcome. For help finding housing or securing a valid address, see Chapter 5.



International Citizen Service West
Dokk1, Aarhus

Opening a bank account in Denmark

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO OPEN a Danish bank account while studying here, and it's essential if you plan to work or apply for SU (student grants).

To open a bank account you'll need a CPR-number, so start by getting that sorted. Once you have it, compare banks for prices and services before choosing one. Opening an account is usually simple: bring your passport and national health insurance card (*sygesikringsbevis*) to a branch or upload them online.

It's advisable to bring enough cash or a valid credit card for your first few weeks to cover rent deposits and other start-up costs. Make sure your card has a chip and PIN (contactless is common but not universal), and check your withdrawal limit to avoid preventable hurdles.

"Nemkonto" – the public payment system

You need to register your Danish bank account with the Danish tax authority as your "Nemkonto" ("easy account"). This allows public institutions to transfer money directly to you, such as SU, tax refunds, or other payments.

Follow the link www.nemkonto.dk/en/ to read more about Nemkonto and to get started.

MobilePay

Most Danes use MobilePay (the Danish equivalent of Venmo or Swish), which lets you instantly transfer money via phone number.

Many companies and stores also use the app. Business numbers are 5 digits, private ones 8.

SU

SU (Statens Uddannelsesstøtte) is Denmark's state educational grant for students at recognised institutions.

All Danish students are eligible to apply for SU, and EU/EEA and Nordic citizens may also be eligible if they meet certain criteria. A key requirement is having a legal paid job of 10–12 hours per week.

If you meet the criteria, you will still have to apply for SU, either through your institution's SU office or at SU.dk.

If you receive SU, be aware that there's a yearly income limit (*fribeløb*). If you earn more than allowed, you'll have to repay part of your SU, so plan your working hours accordingly.

The 2025 SU rate is DKK 7,086 (approx. €950) per month before tax for students not living with their parents. Extra support is available for students with children.

Eligibility overview

You are eligible if you:

- are an EU/EEA citizen
- work 10–12 hours a week (see Chapter 7)
- are completing a full degree at a recognised Danish institution
- You are not eligible if you:
 - are a non-EU/EEA citizen
 - do not (yet) have a qualifying job
 - are an exchange student (studying in Denmark temporarily while enrolled in a home university)

Learn more:

- SU information and application: www.su.dk/english
- Applying for SU as a foreign citizen: www.su.dk/foreign-citizen/gb-foreign-citizen/foreign-citizen-how-to-apply
- Tuition fees and scholarships: www.studyindenmark.com/tuitionfeesscholarships

Phones and Internet

ONCE YOU HAVE A CPR-NUMBER and a bank account, it's easy to get a Danish phone plan and internet connection.

SIM cards are inexpensive, but prices vary depending on your data and call needs. Denmark has almost full 4G/5G coverage, so free Wi-Fi in cafés is becoming increasingly rare, making it a great idea to have your own supply!

If you're from Europe, your phone will most likely work here.

Getting a mobile phone

Many providers offer discounted phones when you sign up. Ask Danish classmates which companies they recommend and choose a plan that fits your budget, ideally one with affordable international use.

For short stays, try a prepaid service like Lebara or Lycamobile. If you're staying for several months, a subscription plan such as Greentel or Oister may be more cost-effective.

You can also use Skype, WhatsApp, or similar apps for international calls.

More info:

www.forbrugseksperten.dk/english/mobile/exchange-student

The country calling code for Denmark is +45.

Internet

MOST UNIVERSITIES, libraries, and student residences have free Wi-Fi. Danish universities use Eduroam – simply ask your institution for login details.

Read more about Eduroam here:

www.eduroam.org

If you rent privately, check with your landlord before ordering broadband, as many buildings already have a provider. Since 5G is widely available, most students now use mobile or USB modems, which are cheap, flexible, and often bundled with phone plans.

Read more here:

www.expats.com/en/guide/europe/denmark/

And here:

www.samlino.dk/blog/internet-options-for-the-tourist-in-denmark

In case of Emergency

Call 112 for ambulance, police, or fire service. Be prepared to give your name, address, and phone number so the right help can be dispatched quickly.

Only call 112 in genuine emergencies. For non-urgent issues, contact your doctor, a medical hotline, or the local police.

Police assistance

Emergency 112
Police 114

Find your local police station, report a crime or get more info: www.politi.dk/en.

Transport

THE EASIEST WAY to get around Danish cities is by bike, on foot, or using public transport. Cars are expensive to buy, fuel, insure, and park (especially in big cities) so consider if you really need one.

Cabs are also costly, but it's smart to save the number or app for a reliable local service in case you ever need it. Ask fellow students which one they recommend.

Public transportation in Denmark is well-organised and includes buses, trains, and light rail systems run by different regional companies under the national network.

It can be quite a jungle to understand the systems, but once you have a Rejsekort (travel card) or a commuter card, you can easily use all public transport without worrying about which company operates it.

If you commute regularly, check whether you qualify for a student commuter card (*Ungdomskort*) as it can save you money.

If you're a student in Denmark, you can buy youth tickets (*ungdomsbilletter*) even if you're over 25. This is a detail even Danes don't tend to be aware of, as it isn't clearly stated when purchasing tickets. Keep in mind that ticket inspectors may ask for proof of enrollment, and a student ID card isn't always accepted, so it's a good idea to carry official documentation from your university.

Regardless, it's worth getting a personal Rejsekort, which works nationwide as a digital ticket (pay-as-you-go or monthly). You can order one online or at your local train station.

Download the Rejseplanen app to plan your trips and check ticket prices across all cities.



USEFUL LINKS:

- DSB (trains): www.dsb.dk/en
- Rejsekort: www.rejsekort.dk
- Ungdomskort (student card): www.ungdomskort.dk/english
- DOT (public transport info): www.dinoffentligetransport.dk/en/

Important info for non-EU/EØS students

More info: www.nyidanmark.dk – Public benefits and residence permits

If you have a residence permit through SIRI, you cannot apply for transport discount like "Ungdomskortet" or the student grant (SU).

If you apply for these grants, it will negatively affect your residence permit.

Healthcare

THE DANISH HEALTHCARE system ensures universal access for all residents, including international students with a CPR-number. Most care is free, except for dental care and physiotherapy.

Doctors and prescriptions

When you get your national health card (*sygesikringsbevis*), you can choose your general practitioner (GP). Ask classmates for recommendations.

If you need to see your GP, arrange an appointment by phone or online using the number on your yellow card. Most GPs also offer phone or online consultations.

Your GP handles general care, prescriptions, and referrals to hospitals or specialist doctors. All prescriptions are digital and linked to your CPR-number. Medicine is sold only at pharmacies (*apotek*).

After-hours medical help

The Doctors on Call-service ("Lægevagten") is free

- Weekdays: 4 pm–8 am
- Weekends and holidays: 24 hours
- Have your CPR-number ready when making the call

PHONE NUMBERS

Greater Copenhagen Region (including Bornholm)	North-Jutland Region (Aalborg)
1813	70 15 03 00
Zealand Region	South-Denmark Region (including Funen)
1818	70 11 07 07
Central-Denmark Region (Aarhus)	
70 11 31 31	

The Danish National Health Insurance Card

Your national health insurance card (*sundhedskort*) states your name, address, and CPR-number as well as the name and address of your general practitioner.

It 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 when collecting prescription drugs at the pharmacy.

The app "Sundhedskortet" allows you to store a valid digital version on your phone.

More info

www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk/healthcare

www.justlanded.com/english/Denmark/health

Medication

Please be aware that certain prescription medications (such as opioid painkillers, anti-anxiety medication, sleeping pills, and ADHD stimulants) are controlled substances in Denmark/EU. If you bring them, you'll need a medicine certificate (prescription passport) or similar documentation.

If you have prescription medication you need to bring to Denmark, ask your doctor and pharmacy if this applies to your medication.

Also, always keep medicines in their original packaging, and carry:

- A copy of your prescription
- A doctor's note describing your condition
- Proof of legal purchase (e.g. a pharmacy receipt)

More info

- [Ministry of Foreign Affairs – medical certificates](#)
- [DIS – Bringing medication to Scandinavia](#)

Dentists and special doctors

UNFORTUNATELY, dental care in Denmark is not covered by the free healthcare system.

Our best tip is to visit your dentist now and to have any major work done before you leave for Denmark. What is free in Germany might well be very expensive in Denmark.

Dentists are private practitioners, and adults over 21 are expected to find their own. Prices are partly subsidised by the state, with the public portion automatically deducted from your bill.

Ask fellow students to recommend a good, dependable dentist, and always remember to check the price list beforehand (many clinics list their rates online, e.g. www.tandbro.dk/en/pricelist/)

For physiotherapy, psychological help, or other specialist doctors, you can get a referral from your GP. This can significantly reduce the cost, so it's worth asking your GP before going private.

Sexual health

Sexual health is openly discussed in Denmark, and you're expected to take responsibility for your own wellbeing. More than 90% of students in higher education have had sex at least once, and topics such as birth control and protection are not taboo (though they're not exactly dinner table conversation either).

Danish students receive sex education throughout primary and secondary school, and using protection is an essential part of this education. Condoms are the only method that protects against both unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. They are widely available in supermarkets and pharmacies and should be used with new partners until both have been tested for STDs. It's perfectly acceptable, if sometimes awkward, to ask your partner to use protection.

If you want to discuss your sexual health, you can contact your GP or visit one of the sexual health clinics available at hospitals in larger cities. All consultations are confidential, and Danish doctors are used to handling these topics professionally and without judgment.

Find information about clinics where you can be tested for STIs here: www.sexogsamfund.dk/en/sex-body-gender/sti-information/sti-clinics-in-denmark

PrEP and HIV Prevention

In addition to condoms, PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is available in Denmark as an effective way to prevent HIV. PrEP can be obtained through infectious disease clinics at major hospitals. It's important to be aware that this medication doesn't protect against other sexually transmitted infections, so it is best used in combination with condoms.



Insurance

MAKE SURE you have proper insurance while studying in Denmark. Some are legally required (e.g., car insurance), while others are simply smart to have.

If you want to use the insurance in Denmark we recommend to check out this brief overview of the types of insurance you will need:

www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/health-safety/insurance

Many insurance companies offer student discounts, and some banks or trade unions include insurance deals. Ask around, compare offers, and don't skip it — you'll be glad to have it if something happens.

Also, remember to cancel your home-country insurance as you can't hold two at once.

World's safest country - unless you're a bike

Denmark is heralded as a very low-crime rate country with a high degree of public trust, a concept always exemplified by the prams with sleeping babies parked outside cafés.

Still, petty theft happens, especially involving phones, laptops, and bikes.

Small precautions will save you big headaches, so keep valuables close, don't leave your phone or laptop unattended, and invest in a solid, insurance-approved bike lock (see page xx).

Third-party liability insurance

Ansvarsforsikring

- Covers costs if you accidentally damage another person's belongings. E.g. spilling coffee on someone's laptop.

Accident insurance

Ulykkesforsikring

- Covers medical and financial costs after an accident. E.g. if you need extended physiotherapy.

Digital Denmark

MITID ("MY ID") IS Denmark's digital login for public services, online banking, SU, SKAT, and more. It's primarily an app, and if you have a biometric passport or national ID card (EU/EEA/Swiss or Nordic citizens), you can set it up yourself by downloading the MitID app.

If your ID isn't accepted, book an appointment with your local Citizen Service (*Borgerservice*). International citizens registered through ICS East / International House Copenhagen must book there: MitID | International House Copenhagen (kk.dk)

MitID consists of a User ID and a password. You log on by entering your User ID and your password first, and then accept the action in the app. It's secure and convenient once set up, though it can be a bit frustrating at first (don't worry, Danes experience this too).

You don't need to be a Danish citizen to get MitID, and having one makes handling official matters far easier, so it's generally worth the effort.

You're eligible for a MitID if:

- You have a Danish CPR-number.
- You are 13 years or older
- You have a valid and approved ID, such as a valid passport, national ID card

More info:

www.en.digst.dk/systems/mitid/

Once you have a NemID/MitID, you can access *Borger.dk*, the main hub for all Danish public services.

Lots of information about moving to Denmark:

www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk

Home insurance

Indboforsikring

- Covers your personal belongings against theft, burglary, or damage.

Family, children and pets

If you have a residence permit as a higher education or PhD student in Denmark, you can usually bring your spouse/partner and children under 18. Cohabiting partners must have lived together for at least 18–24 months before moving to Denmark.

More info about bringing your family with you:

www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/PhD/Phd-studies

Citizen Service (*Borgerservice*) can help with daycare, schools, and registration. Contact them ahead of time if you're moving with children as these things take time to arrange.

Bringing pets to Denmark requires permission before arrival.

More info about bringing your pets with you:

[Travelling with pets – Danish Veterinary and Food Administration](#)

Always check your housing contract, landlord, and flatmates before bringing a pet, as some rentals don't allow animals.

Students with disabilities

Information on support for students with disabilities can be tricky to find. Denmark's system is called SPS (Special Educational Support), which provides compensatory assistance for full-degree students with physical or psychological disabilities.

You can apply for SPS if you:

- You are accepted into a full degree programme
- Your disability is long-term (e.g. hearing or vision impairment, dyslexia, psychological, or physical)
- You are an active student
- You have a CPR-number

You may also apply for:

- Exam accommodations
- Exemption from academic progress rules
- Extended study time

Exchange or guest students can only receive support funded by their home country.

Read more on this link if you are studying at KU:

www.ku.dk/studies/special-educational-support

We hate to see you leave, but...

IF YOU DECIDE LEAVE DENMARK, whether temporarily or permanently, there are a few key things to remember:

- You can stay abroad for up to six months before needing to report it to the authorities.
- If you stay abroad for more than six months, de-register with the Civil Registration Service (CPR) via [borger.dk](#) or your municipality's website.
- You'll keep your CPR-number, you'll simply be registered as living abroad.
- You'll still have digital access (e.g. *borger.dk*) as long as your MitID remains active.
- Also, before leaving, remember to contact your bank, insurance, pension, and sort out housing.

Learn more about moving from Denmark

[Moving from Denmark – CPR](#)

[Life in Denmark – Housing and moving](#)



Chapter 4

Student life

Student life

EVEN IF YOU ALREADY know that Denmark's education system differs from your home country's, you might still be surprised by how Danish student life works.

Though many universities have shared areas, they aren't traditional "campuses." Instead, universities are woven into the cities around them, so your education and daily life often overlap with urban life.



Universities focus mainly on academics (your studies, lectures, and exams), while other parts of student life (housing, clubs, social events) are usually handled by student organisations, non-profits, or government services, not the universities themselves.

This means you might not be offered the same non-academic services you're used to at home. But don't worry! Many Danish students are very social and make friends with their fellow students.

Being a student in Denmark is viewed a bit like having a full-time job. You study, prepare, and take exams, but outside of that, you're expected to live independently: cook, clean, pay bills, and commute to class by bike or public transport.

What you do outside your studies is entirely up to you, and depends on the opportunities in your city. You're the one who shapes your life and learning experience.

If you want tips on how to structure your life as a Danish student, you can find them here:

www.isicdanmark.dk/en/student-life

Being a student

Most Danish universities use a mix of lectures and smaller classroom sessions. Lectures focus on theory and examples, while smaller classes encourage discussion and participation.

The ethos of Danish education is to "take responsibility for your own education." You're rarely tested on readings or attendance, but don't take that as a reason to skip class. Exams, assignments, and group work will still depend on your active participation and preparation, as well as your ability to stay motivated and organised throughout the semester.

As a rule of thumb, students are expected to be independent, inquiring, and responsible. Professors won't tell you exactly how to complete an assignment or what to write. Instead, you're encouraged to find your own solutions. Danish exams value original and well-argued ideas, even when they differ from your professor's opinions.

You've probably guessed that there isn't a strict hierarchy between professors and students. Most professors prefer to be addressed by their first name, and you're welcome to discuss or even disagree with them as long as your argument is academically sound.

Study groups help keep you accountable and make studying less isolating, and whenever possible, avoid studying in your bedroom. If you live in a kollegium, look for shared study rooms. Otherwise, use your faculty's reading halls, university or public libraries, or your local Studenterhus (student house) — they're great for studying, and as an added bonus, they usually have cheap coffee.

Libraries

In Denmark, we have public libraries as well as university libraries. The public libraries are open to everyone and you can register as a user if 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.

As a university student, The royal library has several locations dedicated to different areas of knowledge. These university 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, student facilities like reading halls, group rooms or join the free workshops held at the libraries. You will also find librarians who can help you search for literature. Also, being a user will often grant you with access to online databases and materials as well. Read more and register as a user here:

www.kb.dk/en/become-library-user

Search The Royal Library or find university library locations:

www.kb.dk/en/visit-us

Database and reservation from Danish public libraries:

www.bibliotek.dk/en

Practical university info

Semesters

The Danish academic year usually begins on September 1st, though some universities start in late August. The Spring semester starts around February 1st, following winter exams in January. Summer break runs from late June to mid-August.

Most universities use a two-semester model, but some schools divide the year into three or four quarters with exams after each. Start and break dates are generally similar across institutions.

Check your exact semester start early so you have time to settle in before classes begin (Trust us, juggling housing, CPR registration, and your first week of class all at once can be quite stressful!).

Marks/Grades

Denmark uses a 7-point grading scale, introduced in 2007 to align with international systems. The top grade is 12 (A), and the lowest passing grade is 02.

Some courses have attendance requirements or are pass/fail, depending on exam type and curriculum. Always check the exam format, grading system, and requirements for each course, and if unsure, ask your professor or student guidance counsellor (studievejleder).

For more information on the grading scale and the Danish Education System:

[Danish Grading Scale – Ministry of Education](#)

[The Danish Education System](#)

Counselling and “where to go”

There are several places to get help as a student in Denmark.

- International Office / Student Hub: For questions about studying abroad or practical matters.
- Student Guidance Counsellor (Studievejleder): For course or study-related issues.
- Student Ambassador or Complaints Office: For conflicts with professors or administrative problems.

If you ever feel you've been treated unfairly, remember that you always have the right to appeal, and doing so won't harm your standing as long as you follow procedures. The Danish education system values fairness and transparency, and your voice will be heard, even if the outcome isn't in your favour.

If you want to improve your study environment, join your local student council (*Studenterråd*).

ECTS

Courses are measured in ECTS credits, showing how much of a full-time study load they represent.

One year of full-time study equals 60 ECTS points. A bachelor's degree is typically 180 ECTS, and a master's degree is 120 ECTS.

The system is used across Europe to make it easier to compare and transfer credits between universities.

Learn more here:

www.studyineurope.eu/ects-system

Your local student council – Studenterråd

Your Studenterråd (student council) is open to all students who want to help improve study conditions, academic life, and student culture. Membership and participation are usually free, and while not all groups have much English information online yet, the people involved are friendly and eager to help.

University of Copenhagen:

www.srku.dk

IT University:

www.studentcouncil.dk

Copenhagen Business School:

www.cbsstudents.dk

Roskilde University:

www.sr-ruc.dk/

University of Southern Denmark:

www.syddanskestuderende.dk/eng/

University of Aarhus:

www.sr.au.dk/

Business Academy Aarhus:

www.baadk/about-us/facts-about-business-academy-aarhus/student-and-academy-council/

University of Aalborg:

www.studentersamfundet.aau.dk

National Union of Students in Denmark

All local student councils are represented nationally through the National Union of Students in Denmark (DSF), which works to promote students' interests across the country.

See www.dsfned.dk/en/ for more information.



Life outside university

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 get involved. Though not run directly by the university, there are plenty of social activities, often organised by students from your own field of study.

Some of the most common initiatives are the SU-friendly Friday bars where you can hang out with your fellow students, wind down with a drink, and have fun. If you want to meet students from other programmes, doing a Friday bar pub crawl can be a fun way to do so.

It's also good to know that most faculties have their own student-run coffee bars that are open during the week. They're cozy, laid-back spots where students come to relax, chat, and meet new people. For many, it's an easy and comfortable way to ease into student life, and a great alternative to jumping straight into the bustling Friday bar scene.

Explore different Friday bars and study cafés here:

<https://foreninger.voresku.dk/emner/fredagsbarer-fester/studiecafeer/>

Student jobs

A lot of Danish students have part-time jobs in the service sector, childcare, or fields related to their studies.

Getting a student job is a great way to fund your life as a student and a good way to meet people, make friends, and learn about Danish work culture.

It can, however, be complicated for international students to find work, which is why we have written an entire chapter about it later in this book (see Chapter 7).

Student Houses

All major university cities have student houses. These are volunteer-run hubs with cafés, bars, concerts, and social events. You can join as a visitor or volunteer.

Copenhagen

<https://bystudents.dk/en/>

www.studenterhuset.com/en

www.facebook.com/studenterhusetkbh

www.station.dk

www.facebook.com/Stationcph

Roskilde

www.studenterhusetruc.dk

www.facebook.com/StudenterhusetRUC

Odense

www.studenterhus.dk

www.facebook.com/StudenterhusOdense

Aarhus

www.studenterhusaarhus.dk

www.facebook.com/StudenterhusAarhus

Aalborg

www.studenterhuset.dk

www.facebook.com/studenterhuset.aalborg

If your city doesn't have a student house, check out SYMB in Kalundborg – www.symb.dk



Studenterhuset, Copenhagen

Meeting people

Most universities have social immersion programs for international students, often called mentor, tutor, or buddy programs.

These pair Danish or experienced international students with newcomers to help them settle in, join activities, and adjust to life in Denmark.

Many of the activities you're used to from home likely exist here too, including student-run sports clubs, choirs, societies, and charities.

Often you just have to ask around, look for posters on campus, or check university Facebook groups. Most universities also host yearly events or parties for all students.

Hobbies and interests

Danish students often have active lives outside university, and you should too. Get involved in your city, explore its culture, volunteer, or pursue your own interests.

Much of Danish community life is organised through foreninger (clubs or associations), which exist for almost any interest. Google your hobby and "forening" plus your city, and you'll likely find a match. It's one of the best ways to meet new people.

For more tips on socialising and meeting Danes, see the chapter *Meeting the Danes*.

Do more spend less

Denmark can be expensive, so here are some ways to live well without breaking your budget:

Make a budget

Avoid running out of money before the end of the month, and remember to factor in essentials like food, books, and cleaning supplies. Check out:

www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/bank-budget

Bikes

Get one, use it wisely, and know the biking traffic rules (see page 11).

Drinks

Skip pricey bars. Student houses and the Friday bars are affordable and also often where your fellow students will be.

Danish students often “warm up” at home before going out, which can also help to make your partying a bit more budget-friendly.

Student discounts

Always ask for student discounts on shopping, transport, and events. Your student ID-card should cover it. The ISIC Card (www.isicdanmark.dk/en), is useful, but avoid paying for extra “discount” cards.

Dinner at home with friends

Cooking together is cheap and fun. Take turns hosting, or look for folkekøkkener (community kitchens) in your city if you want to dine out without breaking the bank.

Shopping

Supermarkets like Netto, Rema1000, and Lidl are your budget-friendly options.

Clothes

Check chain stores or supermarkets for deals, or browse thrift shops, flea markets, and online options like vinted.dk or Facebook Marketplace.

Packed lunch

Buying lunch daily adds up fast. Danes grow up with packed lunches, and it's completely normal here.

Volunteer for experiences

Volunteering at festivals or cultural events is a fantastic (and free!) way to experience Danish culture, gain experience, and make friends. You'll often get perks like food, drink vouchers, or after-parties.

Free events

There's always something happening, from concerts to art shows. Keep an eye on local papers, posters, and student house noticeboards, and follow city and university event pages on social media

A more sustainable student life

Be a sustainable role model on campus

As a student in Denmark, there are plenty of ways to reduce the environmental impact of your study life, and often save money at the same time.

Books are \$\$ and CO2 heavy

Academic books are one of the first major expenses for students, and they also carry a large carbon footprint, so buy your books second-hand or as e-books whenever possible.

There are Facebook groups for nearly every Danish university where students trade or sell used books.



Coffee

What do most students need to survive? Coffee! However, coffee is often expensive when you buy it on campus and even worse, all the single-use coffee mugs are increasing our problems connected to plastic pollution and waste management in general. Counter this by either bringing your own coffee mug (sometimes you even get a discount) or just bring your own coffee you made at home.

Getting around sustainably

We've already said it: Get yourself a bike! It's one of the quickest, cheapest, and most sustainable ways to get around.



How to get a bike

You can find affordable bikes at second-hand shops such as Rebike in Aarhus and Buddha Bikes in Copenhagen, on www.dba.dk, or in Facebook groups for international students. Police auctions are another great option. Many international students sell their bikes before leaving, so keep an eye out for those deals.

Pick something sturdy but not flashy (to avoid theft) and not too worn down (to avoid repairs). Always get a good lock (or two!), and write down your bike's frame number. You'll need it for the police or insurance if it's stolen, and you can use it to check if a used bike is legit.

In winter, buy lock antifreeze from a gas station — you'll thank yourself when temperatures drop below zero and your lock still opens.

If you or your friends can fix bikes, great! Otherwise, second-hand bike shops offer inexpensive repairs, and many cities have volunteer-run bike workshops.

Eat sustainable

Besides planning your meals in a weekly meal plan, there are several apps that work towards reducing food waste (and save you some time and money at the same time).

The TooGoodToGo app lets you buy surplus food from supermarkets, cafés, and restaurants at discount prices. It's perfect for students who want to try local spots or pick up fresh produce that would otherwise be thrown away.



Chapter 5

Housing

Housing

CUE THE HORROR MUSIC...

Now for one of the most complicated aspects of student life in Denmark: finding a place to live.

House hunting is rarely fun, but here are some tips to help you navigate the jungle of flats, shares, dorms, sublets, and the occasional dodgy landlord.

Start early. Ideally begin your search as soon as you're accepted into a Danish university, and at least a month before arrival. In the lead-up to each semester, especially July and August, demand skyrockets in the bigger cities.

If you haven't found anything before arriving, budget for temporary accommodation such as hostels, hotels, or Airbnbs, though these are often pricier than student housing.

Most universities have limited student residences, but some offer help finding accommodation so ask your international office. Note that RUC and CBS cannot assist full-degree students.

In regards to budgeting, remember that different cities come with different price tags. Copenhagen is the most expensive, followed by Aarhus; Odense, Roskilde, and Aalborg are cheaper but still not "cheap." Living outside the city centre can lower rent, but check transport and commute times before signing anything.

Student housing is somewhat different in Denmark than it is in other countries. You typically apply directly to kollegiums (dorms) or join a waiting list, not through your university. Demand is high, so apply early and consider other housing options too. Off-campus living gives you a broader taste of Danish life beyond the university bubble.

Rent

Rent can be rather steep in Denmark, especially in the larger cities. A 2024 survey found that students in non-profit housing in Copenhagen or Frederiksberg pay DKK 3,200-4,500 (€430-600) per month, while those in private rentals pay DKK 3,900-5,500 (€520-740). Keep these figures in mind to avoid overpaying.

Later in this chapter, you'll find advice on spotting scams and what to do if you encounter one.

How to find a place to live

Official channels

This is the safest long-term option, though not ideal for short stays. Contact kollegium providers and join waiting lists. Even if you don't get a room right away, it can help for future semesters.

Private/public postings

Search social media, poster walls, and housing sites. Always visit the apartment before paying or signing anything. Never pay a deposit without a contract or keys, and bring a friend to viewings if possible. That way, you won't be as vulnerable to a landlord pressuring you into accepting unfavorable terms.

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 cautious with deposits and check for scam warnings.

Let your network know you're looking; Danish students often find housing this way. Post about your search (city, budget, preferred area) and make it public so friends can share it.

University services

All major universities offer housing advice. Contact your international office or check these links:

- Copenhagen – www.housingfoundation.ku.dk
- Aarhus – www.studenthousingaarhus.com
- Aalborg – www.en.aau.dk/education/apply/international-accommodation-office

Startup Housing Copenhagen

Are you moving to Copenhagen and do you need a place to stay? Startup Housing is temporary housing available for all students in Copenhagen.

Learn more about Startup Housing and your options

studenterhuset.com/en/housing/

by Students



Housing options

Kollegium (Residential halls and dorms)

Kollegiums are Danish student residences housing students from different universities and study levels, usually spread across the city rather than on campus. Many have their own traditions and encourage active social participation. This is a great way to meet people outside your field of studies.

In kollegiums, students typically have a private room and share a large kitchen with 3–25 others, often with a common area for socialising. Some kollegiums are apartment-style, offering more privacy but less of a shared community.

Danish students often sublet their kollegium rooms while studying abroad. If you're interested in moving into a kollegium, ask the students already living there if they know of anyone subletting their room, or keep an eye out for relevant posts in the kollegium Facebook groups.

Admission is usually by waiting list, though some kollegiums accept motivated personal applications. Many kollegiums date back to the 1950s–60s, so don't expect luxury... but do enjoy the experience of community that comes with living with other students.

- CIU – Centralised Kollegium and Student Flat Service: (in Danish) www.s.dk/
- Find Bolig / Find Housing: www.findbolig.nu
- Kollegiernes Office in Copenhagen: www.kollegierneskontor.dk/
- Kollegiekontoret i Aarhus: www.kollegiekontoret.dk/en/
- Student Housing Aarhus: www.studenthousingaarhus.com

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 from private landlords.

You can find listings online. While some sites are free, most charge to reveal contact details.

Check your university's bulletin boards and Facebook housing groups for postings.

Be cautious of scams, and never pay deposits without a signed contract or keys. When sharing a flat (or kollegium kitchen),

agree on cleaning, noise, and party rules early to avoid conflict and a negative atmosphere that could have been prevented. 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 offer rental flats for students and young people. They're affordable but competitive and often require meeting specific criteria.

Start with [Findbolig](#) which lists most student apartments.

What to expect

The harsh truth is that housing is very difficult to come by, even for Danes. Affordable solo apartments are rare, so most students live in kollegiums or shared flats.

If you manage to find a room with access to a kitchen and shower, within 30–40 minutes (by bus or bike) of campus, you're living like a local student.

You can often save money by moving further away from the city, but remember to factor in the time and money you'll end up spending on transportation.

Furniture

If you are subletting or renting a private room or flat, it is sometimes already furnished, which will make your life a lot easier. However, sublets and private rentals often come furnished.

Fortunately, there are affordable ways to set up your space.

IKEA is popular and sometimes offers student discounts; some universities even organise "IKEA drives" at semester start.

Though Denmark is known for its expensive designer furniture, there are cheap furniture alternatives, which are available at shops such as Jysk, Tiger, Søstrene Grene, and many of the large supermarkets.

Second-hand options are everywhere. Most cities have Red Cross and other charity shops that sell affordable furniture. You can also search online at www.dba.dk for second-hand items. Just be sure to check quality before paying, and it's perfectly fine to haggle the price before you commit to buying.

Finally, check out Facebook groups where people sell used furniture (or even give away for free).

- Aarhus: www.bytteboxen.com
- Copenhagen: www.a-r-c.dk
- Aarhus (local recycling): www.kredslob.dk

How to avoid housing scams

As in any city with a competitive rental market, housing scams do occur in Danish university towns. International students, often in urgent need of housing, are especially vulnerable.

Take time to research local prices and standards ask friends and classmates for input so that you have a solid understanding of prices and housing standards. The golden rule is to never pay without getting everything in writing. And remember, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Always get a signed contract stating rent, duration, notice period, and other terms. Without a written agreement or if you pay "under the table," you have no legal claim if it turns out to be a scam. You can avoid a lot of unpleasant experiences by doing this.

If you do encounter unpleasant experiences or get scammed, contact Lejernes Landsorganisation (The Tenants Organisation). They can advise you on your rights and options.

- Lejernes landsorganisation: www.llo.dk/om-llo/internationalt
- Free rent service: www.rentguide.dk/en

Danish apartments and addresses...

In Denmark, the ground floor is 0 (or st. for stuen), the next floor is 1st, and so on. Apartments are described by number of "rooms" (bedrooms + living room), excluding kitchen, bathroom, and hallways.

This is the typical address format:

- Name of the tenant/company (you can write c/o if the tenant/company's name isn't stated in official registers yet or their name isn't on the mailbox)
- Street name
- House number
- Floor number
- Followed by apartment placement: th. (to the right), mf. (the middle), or tv. (to the left)

Remember to include your postal code and city name (as in 1608 København V) when writing your address.

Example:
byStudents
c/o Foreningen Studenterhuset
Købmagergade 52, 3. th
1150 København K

Chapter 5: Housing

DOs

- Check who owns the property
- Always see the place in person
- Verify the rent level
- Get everything in writing
- Document any defects (photos help)
- Know the subletting rules
- Ensure the property matches the contract
- Double-check legality if you can't register your postal address there

DON'Ts

- Pay cash or via foreign accounts
- Accept pressure from landlords
- Pay "under the table"
- Overpay deposits (max 3 months' rent)
- Dismiss a decent location too quickly


Practical Info

Tap water is drinkable all over Denmark, and is in fact often better than bottled.

Danish houses are normally very well insulated with double or triple glazing; heating is via water radiators. Setting 3 usually keeps rooms comfortably warm.

As the radiators run via thermostats, remember to turn off the radiator when windows are open to avoid excessive bills.

Kollegiums and apartments have shared laundry rooms as standard, so don't be surprised if there's no private washing machine in your apartment. Ask for info about where you can do laundry when moving in.

A black bicycle with red accents is parked on a dirt path in a field of tall grass. In the background, a modern apartment building with a distinctive white facade and a large brown roof section is visible under a cloudy sky.

Let the house hunting begin

Here are some helpful links
(note: some in Danish)

- Finding housing: www.studyindenmark.dk/live-in-denmark/housing-1/find-housing
- Non-profit housing info: www.bl.dk/non-profit-housing-in-denmark/
- Flats and youth housing: www.findbolig.nu
- Lejerbo: www.lejerbo.dk
- Roommates: www.findroommate.dk
- Flats and rooms for rent: www.dba.dk
- Shared apartments, and rooms for rent: www.en.lejebolig.dk



Chapter 6

Meeting til Danes

Meeting danes

THE DANES. They're everywhere, and yet somehow seem like an elusive rarity in your life as an international student.

They're there physically, sure, but how do you actually meet them, get to know them, or maybe even (drumroll) date them?

It can seem impossible, and maybe it feels easier to just stick with other internationals and joke about the "antisocial Danes." But if you want a local network (your shortcut to jobs, housing, and a great time in Denmark), befriending Danes is a must.

Cultural differences

First of all: Danes aren't antisocial or hostile toward international students. Of course there are unfriendly people everywhere, but it's not the norm. They simply form friendships a bit differently than in many other cultures.

Denmark has been a culturally homogenous country for centuries, so your Danish classmates might not realise that other cultures "do friendship" differently, and you might read their behaviour as disinterest when it's really just unfamiliarity.

Expats often say, "Danes only hang out with people they already know," which can make forming new friendships tricky. But there are ways around it — and once you're "in," Danes are famously loyal friends.

Danes tend to form social bonds through school, work, hobbies, or sports, so they aren't used to making friends with strangers. Even those who aren't lonely may already have full schedules with long-time friends, jobs, and family, which can make them seem less open to new people.

Still, many are open — they just won't say it outright. You might need to take more initiative than you're used to.



Be curious. Ask questions about Danish culture and share your own. Use the cultural differences to your advantage. Most people love to talk about their background and appreciate people who are genuinely interested.

As with any culture, remember: there's no one-size-fits-all formula. These are just insights and tips to help you navigate Danish social life.



Hygge

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

Google might translate it as "cosiness" or "comfort," but you won't truly understand it until you experience it.

Hygge can mean hanging out with friends, relaxing alone, enjoying a summer evening, or curling up by candlelight in winter.

Try using it as an icebreaker and asking your Danish classmates to explain it, and you will get at least five different ideas about what hygge is.

Humour

Another thing that you might find "weird" about your Danish friends could very well be their sense of humour. It's famously dry, sarcastic, and irreverent, and not even authority figures are off-limits. Self-deprecating jokes (selvironi) are especially popular, and Danes generally have no problem laughing at themselves.

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 watching a Danish comedy or stand-up show with subtitles to get a sense of it.

It's perfectly fine if you don't find it funny, as long as you don't take the sarcasm personally. It's rarely meant as an insult.

Meeting people at the university

THE FIRST STEP to finding Danish friends is knowing *where* to meet them. Luckily, university life offers plenty of natural opportunities to connect, even if you don't know anyone yet.

Mentor/buddy programs

Most universities have mentor or buddy programs that provide practical help and a ready-made 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 cultivating an international network.

If you're a long-term student, ask your international office about becoming a mentor yourself. It's a great way to help newcomers while expanding your own network.

Clubs and activities

Universities have countless clubs and *foreninger* (associations), so joining one that aligns with your interests is one of the fastest ways of connecting with Danes who share your interests.

Love music? Try the choir, musical club, or yearly revue.

Enjoy Friday bars? Volunteer with the organising team.

Into sports? Join your department's team or the university's central sports organisation.

Many faculties also have academic clubs or alumni associations that host both social and professional events.

Check out student associations at:

- Aalborg University: www.students.aau.dk/student-life/
- University of Copenhagen: www.foreninger.voresku.dk

SU-friendly Friday bars and parties at your course or institute

Cheap, local, and full of students from your own field, Friday bars are the easiest way to socialise. You'll have plenty to talk about while sharing a cheap beer, soda, or drink, playing board games, and commiserating over exams.

Many departments also run student cafés that double as study or hangout spaces. These are especially great at the start of the semester when everyone's eager to make new friends.



Studenterhuset aka the Student House

All the major university cities in Denmark have their own Studenterhus aka Student House, which are volunteer-run, non-profit social hubs for students.

They serve as cafés, bars, concert venues, and event spaces with student-friendly prices and a great atmosphere.

Beyond the social life, they also host job fairs, networking events, housing info sessions, and public debates.

You can simply join the fun or sign up as a volunteer. It's a sure way to meet new people (and gain experience for your CV).

Become a volunteer

Student volunteers run most of these aforementioned activities either partly or completely. Getting involved is one of the best ways to meet Danes, build friendships, and contribute to campus life.

Offer your time and enthusiasm — student houses, clubs, and local initiatives are almost always happy for an extra hand.

Other volunteering options are covered in the next section.

How to get involved

“Foreningskultur”

A unique part of Danish social life is the *forening*. A forening is a kind of democratic, membership-based organisation built around a shared goal or activity. A member-run board manages it, and every member has a say.

This is how most sports clubs, leisure activities, interest-based groups, and volunteer organisations work in Denmark, and it's where many people form networks outside work or school. About 90% of Danes belong to at least one *forening*, so there's likely one for you too.

Joining a *forening* is not only a great way to meet people, but also to experience a very Danish institution. If you join a sports club rather than a “pay & go” gym, you'll usually find social events, fundraisers, and committees connected to it, making it a fun and easy way to meet Danes and build 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 field of interest.

If you're interested in regular (weekly or monthly) volunteer work, your local *Studententerhus* or Student Council is a great place to start, as they rely heavily on student volunteers for cafés, events, and organizing social activities for other students.

You can also volunteer at non-profit cafés or charity organisations, such as *Globalhagen* in Copenhagen or *Café MellemFolk* in Aarhus. Roles range from bartending and event planning to communications and PR.

Find more opportunities at www.frivilligjob.dk or ask fellow students about local options.

Remember that a lot of volunteering happens within *foreninger*, so if you're interested in a particular hobby or cause, there's likely a related organisation to join.

Many Danish students also volunteer at bigger events such as film festivals, Fashion Week, and cultural celebrations. This can be a fun, social way to get involved without having to commit on a weekly basis.

For large festivals like Roskilde, you can sign up with friends and volunteer as a group.

Danish friends

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE that Danes tend to distinguish between *friends* (*venner*), the few they're truly close to, and more casual acquaintances such as classmates or colleagues. The word *venner* carries more weight than the English “friends.”

So how to befriend the Danes?

Danes tend to make friends through school, work, volunteering, sports, or hobbies. They rarely consider new acquaintances “friends” right away, even if they meet through shared interests.

Friendship usually develops gradually: first you share an activity side by side, chatting casually; then you start socialising in a group context, for example after class, on trips, or at team parties.

Only after this stage does one-on-one socialising naturally follow. For Danes, this slow progression makes friendship feel organic and earned rather than forced or superficial.

Building friendships with Danes takes time and effort, but once you reach that “true friendship” stage, it's absolutely worth it.



Friendship tips

- Be patient. Friendships with Danes take time to form
- Join clubs, projects, or hobbies you actually enjoy
- Go to social gatherings and talk to people
- If Danes seem reserved, they might just be shy or respecting your space, so just approach them anyway
- Remember, Danes can find making new friends just as hard as you do. Don't expect instant closeness
- Take initiative and suggest doing things together

Timeliness

Being on time

THE DANES ARE, in general, a punctual people. You'll soon notice that trains, meetings, classes, and even social plans tend to start exactly when scheduled, and expectations of punctuality are high.

So... when are you considered late?

For formal situations, assume you're late if you're not there at the agreed time. Aim to arrive five minutes early, just to be safe.

In social settings, a delay of five to ten minutes is usually acceptable, but do let people know if you're running behind. This applies to both formal and informal events.

For appointments like doctor visits, interviews, or exams, being late can mean losing your slot entirely, so be punctual.

The academic quarter

Some universities use "the academic quarter," meaning classes start 15 minutes past the hour. So, if your schedule says 13:00, class begins at 13:15.

When unsure, turn up early for the first class and adjust once you know what applies.



The Exceptions to the Lateness Rules

Is everything always on time in Denmark? Am I never allowed to be late?

As with everything, of course, there are a few exceptions to the rules.

Parties and casual events

Big university or Friday bar parties usually don't have strict arrival times, unless food is served. If there is, then be on time.

Events advertised as "You're welcome between XX and YY" let you arrive when it suits you, though most people appreciate it if you arrive early enough to enjoy the event.

If you've arranged to meet someone beforehand, normal social expectations about punctuality apply again.

Should I be early?

Most Danes dislike guests arriving early. More than 10 minutes and you risk catching your host mid-preparation (or mid-show-er). Only come early if you've asked in advance.

"We're Going to Be at This Bar All Evening, Drop by Whenever..."

That's exactly what it means. You can text to check if they're still there if you're joining late, but it's not expected.

Cancelling plans

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS:

If you need to cancel or reschedule, there's usually an app, phone number, or email. Do it no later than the day before, or you might be fined.

SOCIAL PLANS:

Cancel as soon as you know you can't make it. It's rarely a problem, but people appreciate the notice so they don't wait for you.

The awkward art of the Danish invitation

For larger events like Friday bars or class parties, everyone belonging to the relevant group is considered to have been invited. You may not get an official invitation, but you're still welcome. If unsure, ask your classmates if they're going.

For private social events, you'll usually receive an invitation, and it's polite to RSVP whether you can attend or not.

When joining smaller gatherings or private parties, always ask before bringing someone new along.

How do invitations to different events normally work in Denmark?

If your department has a student café or Friday bar, no formal invite is needed.

The same goes for Facebook events or posters inviting "all students" from your department.

If your classmates say, "Are you coming to the Friday bar?" or "Let's all go to the café!" This is considered an open invitation, and you're welcome to join.

Casual Socialising

AT HOME:

Since most Danish students live in kollegiums, shared flats, or small student apartments, their homes aren't always suited for hosting guests or parties.

Don't take it personally if your new Danish friends don't invite you over early on.

In kollegiums, however, shared kitchens make group socialising easy, and dinners or parties there are quite common. Invitations will usually be given directly.

It's polite to ask if you should bring anything or help with cooking, and most parties are "bring your own beverage."

Danes aren't big fans of unannounced visitors, so if you're nearby and want to stop by, text first to check if they're up for company.

Scheduling, punctuality, and spontaneous hanging outs

Some things you might discover when befriending Danes is that the average Danish student likes to schedule most things in their life, including their social time.

Punctuality is valued, and if you're running late or need to cancel, let your friends know in advance. A quick text is fine, and cancelling in plenty of time is considered polite.

Because of this planning culture, it can be tricky to make spontaneous plans. Don't take it personally, simply suggest a future date that works for both of you.

Turning down invitations

It's perfectly okay to turn down an invitation in Denmark.

While someone might be disappointed, it's not a social faux pas. Honesty is appreciated over polite excuses.

Dating in Denmark

THERE'S NO FORMAL dating "code" in Denmark, no set rules about who calls first or who pays.

Dating apps have made meeting new people easier, but many still meet partners through friends, school, work, or clubs. Relationships often grow from existing connections rather than formal dates.

The Danish word *kæreste* means boyfriend/girlfriend or live-in partner and implies commitment.

When dating, Danes often meet for coffee or a walk while dinner usually comes later, when things get more serious.

If you're setting up a date, ask your match to show you their favourite café, museum, or spot in the city. This gives you something to talk about and a way to discover your new surroundings.



Sex Education and Sexual harassment

Around 80% of all 19-year-old Danes have had sex, so it's considered a natural part of young adult life in Denmark.

Sex education is provided throughout primary and high school, and it's normal for parents to allow their teenagers' partners to stay over.

One of the main lessons in Sex-Ed is, of course, to use protection.

Condoms are readily available in supermarkets and pharmacies and are the only protection against both unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. If you're at higher risk, it's also recommended to consider PrEP, which helps prevent HIV.

Always use protection with new partners, and remember, it's

never embarrassing to ask your partner to use protection. It might feel momentarily awkward for both parties, but it's normal and responsible.

You always have the right to set and enforce your personal boundaries, to say yes or no to intimacy. If you experience sexual assault, all major Danish hospitals have dedicated clinics for this, and you are safe to report the incident to the police.

Remember that alcohol consumption neither negates nor constitutes consent under Danish law. Sexual harassment is never acceptable or your fault. If you experience anything uncomfortable, contact your local student council for guidance, or, if you wish to press charges, call the police or one of the sexual assault hotlines.

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 come alive outdoors.

People grill in parks, bring wine and beer to the beach, watch outdoor movies (often free), and play ball games on any patch of grass. Outdoor sports facilities are also popular social spots.

In the colder seasons, Danes still go for walks (just remember your raincoat and warm sweater) or visit the skating rinks that pop up in most cities during winter.

Throughout the year, you'll find countless cultural and social events like festivals, carnivals, art shows, and food markets. Some cities combine them into massive celebrations like Aarhus Festuge or Golden Days in Copenhagen.

Bring your friends, explore, and experience what your city has to offer. Many events are free or have student discounts (or you can volunteer for free entry).

Even in Denmark's biggest cities, it's rare to find truly unsafe areas. Stay aware of local news, but in general, you can explore freely. Wander through new neighbourhoods and you might just stumble upon hidden street art, a quiet park, or your new favourite burger spot.



Going out

STUDENTS GOING OUT is a fact of life in Denmark. Whether you drink or not, much of student social life revolves around bars, cafés, and parties.

Dining out isn't as common here, likely due to restaurant prices, and Danes tend to eat early in the evening, usually between 18:00 and 20:00. Most people go out after dinner, having eaten at home.

For students, the local Studenterhus or university bar is a great place to start. Many also frequent the neighbourhood bodega, the Danish version of an old-school pub, with cheaper drinks than the fancier spots.

Alcohol is served to everyone over 18, though some clubs have 21+ rules or dress codes. In general, the Danes dress stylishly but casually when they go out. Most places will let you in if you're wearing sneakers and jeans.

Many bars and clubs stay open until 4 or 5 a.m., and since most people eat before going out, your Danish friends might head out later than you expect (or earlier, if you're from Spain).

Alcohol and drugs

In Denmark, the legal drinking age is 16 for alcoholic beverages with less than 6% alcohol by volume (ABV), and 18 for drinks containing more than 6% alcohol. Some bars and venues may have higher age limits, which are usually listed on their website or social media.

Most bars don't check IDs at the counter, but random checks do happen, so always bring valid ID. Danish student life can sometimes seem centred around alcohol, but you can absolutely join the fun without drinking.

All bars and cafés serve non-alcoholic options, and your choice will be respected even if someone initially offers you a beer.

If you do drink, plan your way home in advance. Driving a car, e-scooter, or bike while intoxicated is illegal.

You'll probably see Danes biking home after a night out, but don't follow their (bad) example. It's unsafe, technically illegal, and can easily lead to injury, hospital bills, or a broken bike. Drunk biking can even cost you your driver's license.

If you drive a car, the legal blood alcohol limit is 0.5‰, which is roughly one beer. Anything above that can result in heavy fines, license suspension, or even jail time. The law is strictly enforced.

Now, for the serious part: drugs. All drugs, including marijuana, are illegal in Denmark. Selling, buying, or possessing them

(even just holding them for a friend) can result in fines, jail time, and for international students, deportation. Despite how casual some Danes may seem about weed, the law isn't.

The easiest way to avoid the consequences of illegal drug use is to simply not do them.

Stay Safe

Know your limits, and make sure you have your route home planned, as well as the bus schedule, cab number, and your address noted down.

Denmark is very safe, but use common sense, especially in a new city and when drinking.

Keep an eye on your belongings and drink, and tell friends when you're leaving and with whom.

If you're new and might forget your address, text it to a friend before heading out — that way, you'll have it even if you lose your phone.

Top up your Rejsekort or other travel card beforehand, and check which night bus, train, or metro runs your route home.



LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and also includes identities such as non-binary, asexual, and pansexual.

Denmark is widely recognised for being open-minded, tolerant, and inclusive toward the LGBTQ+ community.

In most larger cities, LGBTQ+ people can expect a welcoming atmosphere.

Copenhagen, in particular, has a vibrant and diverse queer scene, and both Copenhagen and Aarhus host major Pride parades each summer, with smaller cities increasingly joining in.

Look for venues with the rainbow sticker to find LGBTQ-friendly bars, cafés, and events, and check your local Student House, which might host queer social or creative clubs.

Same-sex civil marriage was legalised in 1989 and church marriages in 2012, and LGBTQ+ people are protected under Danish anti-discrimination and equal rights laws.

If you experience discrimination, harassment, or a hate crime, you can report it to the police by calling 114 (or 112 in emergencies). Hate crimes are treated as serious offences in Denmark.

For more information:

- Danish LGBTQ+ Foundation – www.lgbt.dk/en
- Out & About magazine's LGBTQ+ Guide to Copenhagen – www.outandabout.dk/copenhagen-lgbt-guideLGBT+DanmarkHome-English

Sabaah is a volunteer-run organisation supporting LGBTQ+ people of minority ethnic background.

Visit www.sabaah.dk/welcome-to-saba



Chapter 7

Student job

Getting a student job

Can I work in Denmark?

Nordic, EU/EEA, or Swiss citizens can work freely in Denmark under EU free movement rules. There are no limits on working hours.

If you are an EU citizen working in Denmark, you may also qualify for SU (the Danish student grant). To be eligible as a non-Danish student, you must work at least 10–12 hours per week and have a work contract before applying. Note that SU has an annual income limit.

Non-EU/EEA/Swiss citizens are allowed to work up to 20 hours a week and full-time during June, July and August. The same applies during the 6-month job-seeking period after completing a full-degree programme.

When it comes to employment rules as an international student, it's always better to be safe than sorry!



Work in Denmark

A large percentage of Danish university students have student jobs.

Landing a part-time job may not be your first task when you arrive, but if you plan to stay more than one semester or apply for SU, consider getting one.

Many people find jobs through their personal networks, so making Danish and international friends can already be a big step.

It can be difficult to find a job if you don't speak Danish, and competition for student jobs is tough, so plan your finances so you can support yourself for at least your first semester.

What kind of jobs can you get as a student?

Restaurants, cafés, bars and hotels often employ international students who don't speak Danish, and some retail stores do as well.

You might also find a job that uses your language skills or knowledge of your home culture. For example, in tourism or with a company doing business with your country. Translation work or writing for English-speaking media can also be good options.

While you might prefer a job related to your field of study, remember that even Danish students find that difficult. Gaining general Danish work experience first can make it easier to get a more relevant job later.

Campus jobs are limited and often require Danish, though you might find positions as a research assistant, instructor, or administrative assistant within international programs.

Universities post job openings on their online job banks or internship portals.

More info:

- www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk/working
- www.nyidanmark.dk/

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. You risk deportation, and both you and your employer can face fines or prison sentences. Always make sure your employment complies with the rules.

Where do I find a job?

Ask people you know

Many jobs are never advertised. Ask friends, classmates, and other students if they know places hiring, and tell them about your experience. Let your network know on social media that you're looking for work.

Hand out your CV in stores and cafés/bars/restaurants

Many international students print and hand out CVs in stores, cafés, or bars. Ask before handing one over, since some businesses only accept online applications, and others may refuse printed CVs due to GDPR.

Check the companies' websites

Retail, bar, and hotel jobs are not always listed in job banks but may appear on company websites. Larger chains post openings online; smaller ones may accept unsolicited applications. Include a short note on how you could help the company.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an excellent tool for finding student jobs in Denmark. Many companies post student assistant positions specifically seeking English-speaking applicants, with Danish being an advantage rather than a requirement.

Social media

LinkedIn is popular in Denmark. Keep your profile up to date: www.students.linkedin.com/ You can also find Facebook groups for internationals looking for student jobs.

Online job banks and internship portals

- Jobbank.dk (university job sites)
- Moment.dk (short-term/event jobs)
- workindenmark.dk/ (non-Danish speakers)
- JobTeaser (student jobs and internships)
- Jobindex.dk (largest Danish job database)
- LinkedIn (platform for networking and finding jobs)

CV and cover letter

For any job application, you'll need a CV (resumé) and a cover letter

Always follow the employer's instructions to the letter. Send your application exactly as requested, whether by email or online form, as doing so ensures your application is actually considered.

CV

It's customary to include a photo on your CV. Choose a clear, professional-looking one.

Keep your CV short and relevant (max. 2 pages), and list your most recent experience first. Separate education, work experience, and other skills to make it easy to read.

Adapt your CV for each job and highlight relevant experience. Templates and examples can be found online, for instance at

www.state-of-denmark.com/

Cover letter

Keep it targeted, relevant, and short (ideally one page). Use it to explain why you're a good match and how the company could benefit from hiring you. Avoid clichés and long sentences — clear, straightforward language works best.

DOs

- Focus on how the workplace benefits from hiring you
- Spell-check and get feedback
- Make it personal and memorable

DON'Ts

- Send identical letters to everyone
- Ramble or overshare
- Forget contact details

Danish work culture

DANISH WORK CULTURE is generally relaxed and informal. It's customary to address superiors by their first name, especially if they introduce themselves that way. Collaboration and teamwork are valued, while "stepping on others to get ahead" is frowned upon.

Work-life balance matters, so working overtime doesn't earn you any extra points. The motto is work smarter, not harder. Even your boss might leave early to pick up their kids or take a few days off.

If you're unsure about anything, it's fine to ask a colleague for guidance. When you start a job, ask about sick leave, work hours, and vacation policies so you know the rules.

How to dress for a job

Most workplaces without uniforms have no strict dress code. Danes usually dress smart-casual. Jeans are fine, and suits or ties are rarely required.

If unsure, take cues from how your Danish colleagues dress.

How to ask your friends about jobs?

It's perfectly acceptable to ask friends for advice or tips (just don't expect them to get you a job). You might ask:

- Have you heard of places hiring?
- Where did you find your job?
- Could you let me know if your workplace is looking for student employees?

If your friend's workplace sounds interesting and they're hiring, it's fine to ask how to apply, as long as you don't expect special treatment.

More information

- nyidanmark.dk
- workindenmark.dk

Job portals in English:

- jobbank.dk/en
- jobindex.dk

Start your own business:

- workindenmark.dk/start-your-own-business

Career Development Programme for Master's Students:

- student.state-of-denmark.com

More work info

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD about the mythical Danish five weeks of legally guaranteed vacation.

It's not a myth, but reality for most types of salaried employment in Denmark.

Once you start working, you'll likely encounter feriepenge, which translates to "holiday money." Even Danes struggle to explain it, so here's how it works:

Holiday allowance is money you earn along with your wages and can claim when you take vacation. It's especially relevant for hourly jobs or positions without paid vacation in the contract.

If vacation pay isn't automatic, your employer sets aside 12.5% of your salary each paycheque as holiday allowance — an extra amount, not deducted from your pay. You can usually see this on your payslip.

The allowance is earned in advance, so in your first year it won't apply yet, but you can transfer unused amounts from previous jobs (valid for one holiday year).

When taking time off, inform your employer and submit your vacation dates through your workplace's system or via lifeindenmark.borger.dk. The holiday pay will then be transferred to your account automatically.

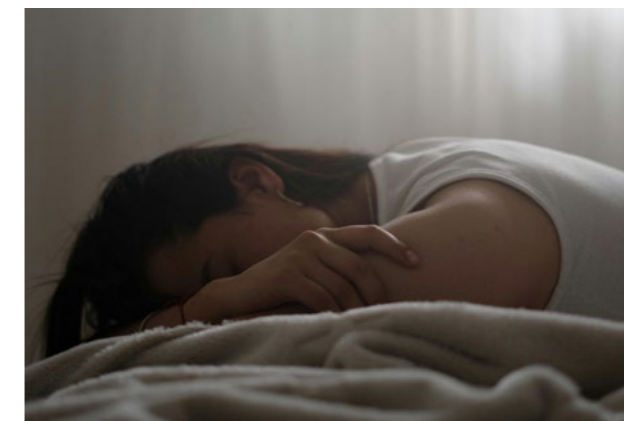
More info on Holiday Allowance can be found here:

www.workindenmark.dk-holiday-allowance

Sick leave

In Denmark, most workplaces don't operate with terms like "personal time off" as a substitute for sick leave, and you're not supposed to use your vacation days when sick.

Salaried employees usually receive full pay during illness (see your contract), while hourly workers may not.



Check your workplace policy on how and when to call in sick, but know that you're always entitled to stay home when ill.

Since COVID-19, municipalities have encouraged people to stay home with flu-like symptoms to avoid spreading illness.

Unemployment Insurance Fund (A-kasse)

In Denmark, most people are members of an unemployment insurance fund (a-kasse), which secures you financially if you lose your job.

In order to secure yourself against unemployment, you can purchase your own insurance through a private unemployment insurance fund.

This is important, as idle workers receive unemployment benefits (dagpenge) from the unemployment insurance fund along with counseling to help them find a job.

If you're not insured, the state may offer limited financial support, but membership in an a-kasse is strongly recommended.

Students under 30 can usually join for free and gain access to career counselling, job search help, and workshops.

This means that the unemployment insurance fund can help you, if for instance you need a student job, help writing your CV and applications, or want to learn more about the job opportunities that are relevant to your education.

To qualify for benefits after graduation, remember the 2-week rule and 1-year rule:

- Join an a-kasse no later than two weeks after completing your education.
- If you wait until graduation to join, you'll need to wait one month before receiving benefits.
- If you've been a student member for at least one year, you're eligible for benefits the day after graduation.

The benefit rate for new graduates is 10,054 DKK (€1,350) per month before tax for the first three months, then slightly lower (and higher if you have children).

As with any insurance, it's a question of "what if..."

You might have a job lined up when you graduate, but if it falls through, what then?

Even if you're only out of a job for a couple of months, being able to receive unemployment benefits means that you don't need to take out a loan to be able to pay for food, rent, and other necessities.

In other words, being a member of an a-kasse is a good idea! So choose one that matches your field of study or future career path, and ask classmates or friends for recommendations, as there are several different ones specializing in different fields.



38,000 student members can't go wrong.

Denmark's largest student community in IT, science & engineering.

We help you get the best study time and a strong career start — plus affordable insurance, student discounts, and great events.

Become a student member for free

Scan the QR code and become a student member of IDA for DKK 0 the first year. After that, only DKK 20 per month.



Unions

Trade unions (fagforeninger) negotiate collective agreements and protect workers' rights.

Being a member of a trade union is the norm in Denmark, as they can provide guidance and legal support on employment contracts, pay, workplace conditions, and injuries.

When accepting a job, always get a written contract, at minimum, one that outlines your duties, hours, and salary. It protects you and gives unions something to refer to if problems arise.

There's no legal minimum wage in Denmark, so collective agreements are key. If your workplace isn't part of one, pay can vary, but around DKK 100/hour is typical. Ask your union or search online for average rates in your field/for your role.

Student memberships are often cheap or free. Choose one relevant to your studies or job.

Some unions also include a-kasse membership and offer discounts or career services.

You don't need to join both, but you can if it suits you.

Find out more:

- About a-kasser: www.a-kasser.dk/unemployment-fund-and-union/index.html
- About terms of employment: www.workindenmark.dk
- General information about work life in Denmark: www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk/working

Tips og tips

Denmark doesn't have a culture of tipping. Tips are appreciated but not expected, and shouldn't replace fair wages.

Most service staff pool their tips in a shared jar, so check your workplace policy before keeping them yourself.

Taxes (SKAT)

If you have a paid job, you have to pay taxes. It's as simple as that.

Most employers report your income to SKAT, so tax is automatically deducted from your pay. Remember to ask how it works at your job and if they report the taxes automatically. If not, you'll need to report and pay through your årsopgørelse (annual tax return) on www.skat.dk.

Expect to pay around 40-45% in various taxes, even as a student, so include this in your budget.

Taxes are what fund free education, healthcare, and other public services, a system most Danes value highly, even if the deductions sting in the moment when you see your pay check cut in half.

If you have questions, contact SKAT or check their website, www.skat.dk.



What is a tax card?

If you have a job, you must apply for a tax card once you get your CPR number.

Contact SKAT, tell them how much you expect to earn for the year, and they'll create a digital tax card (you won't receive a physical one). Your employer retrieves this automatically so the correct amount is deducted.

Learn more:

- www.skat.dk/taxation-in-denmark
- www.lifeindenmark.borger.dk/tax-matters



Chapter 8

History and culture

Denmark's 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 appears on the famous Jelling Stone from around 900 AD.

In 1849, Denmark adopted its Constitution, moving from absolute monarchy to parliamentary democracy.

Important years in recent Danish history:

- 2011: Helle Thorning-Schmidt is the first female PM
- 2015: Andreas Mogensen is the first Dane in space
- 2025: Denmark won the Men's World Championship in handball for the fourth time in a row.

More history

- [denmark.dk – History of Denmark](https://denmark.dk/en/history-of-denmark)
- [BBC Historical Timeline](https://www.bbc.com/history/country/denmark-timeline)



The Danish society

Denmark is known internationally for its welfare state and social system.

The Danish welfare model, or Scandinavian model, is based on the principle that all citizens have equal rights to social security.

As a result, many services, including healthcare, education, and social support, are free and funded by relatively high taxes.

This system has created a socially mobile, largely middle-class society where everyone has equal access to key public services.

Danish model and flexicurity

WHEN PEOPLE TALK about the Danish job market they often use the term "flexicurity" to describe it.

The word flexicurity is a combination of flexibility and security.

On the one hand, employers can hire and lay off staff easily, while on the other, employees are protected by strong unemployment benefits through membership in an a-kasse.

The aim of this system is to promote employment security rather than job security, meaning Danes worry less about losing work.

The model relies on a long tradition of negotiations between trade unions and employers' associations, ensuring fair conditions for both workers and businesses.

Political system

Folketinget

Denmark has a multi-party parliamentary system. Folketinget (the People's Assembly) is housed at Christiansborg Palace in central Copenhagen. Governments are usually minority coalitions that rely on cooperation across parties, reflecting Denmark's consensus-driven political culture.

This means that Danish politics are based on consensus-driven decisions and negotiations with all parties in Folketinget. Since 1909, no single party has solely held or monopolised the majority.

The 1849 Constitution (Grundloven, "Founding Law") forms the basis of Danish democracy, guaranteeing freedoms such as speech and assembly.

Folketinget passes laws, approves budgets, oversees government activity, and engages in international cooperation.

There are 179 Members of Parliament (MPs) – 175 are elected in Denmark, two are elected in the Faroe Islands and two in Greenland.



Together, these form the Unity of the Realm, with the Faroe Islands and Greenland maintaining extensive home rule, distinct cultures, and their own flags and languages.

Learn more about Folketinget her:

www.thedanishparliament.dk

Municipalities and local government

Denmark is divided into 98 municipalities (kommuner) and five regions (regioner), each governed by publicly elected councils serving four-year terms.

Denmark and EU

Denmark has been a member of the European Union since 1973, with opt-outs in citizenship, police and justice, and the euro.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a 2022 referendum ended Denmark's defence opt-out, with two-thirds voting in favour.

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.

In addition to these, there are national referendums on topics directly related to issues of national concern.

Can I vote?

Yes, to an extent. International students from Nordic and EU countries can vote in municipal and regional elections.

Other international students may vote after three years of residence. Only Danish citizens can vote in national elections or referendums.

The monarchy

Denmark is a monarchy. It is, in fact, one of the oldest in the world, dating back to at least 958 AD.

The current monarch is King Frederik X.

Denmark has been a constitutional monarchy since 1849, and over the years the political power of the reigning monarch has been reduced and now they only have a ritual position in regards to the political decisions.

The prime minister has to present his or her government and law suggestions for a formal approval, but these actions are ceremonial and do not have real political value.

Even in 2024, 75% of the Danes are still supportive of the monarchy, and in 2018 more than 80% believed that the Royal Family were good representatives of Denmark.



School life in Denmark

Children typically start daycare around age one, followed by kindergarten and then folkeskole (primary and lower secondary school).

Folkeskole consists of one year of pre-school, nine years of compulsory education, and an optional tenth year.

Afterward, students can continue to upper secondary school, vocational training, or apprenticeships.

Three years of upper secondary education qualify students to apply for universities, professional bachelor's programmes, or technical and business schools.

Education for all

Education is mandatory from ages 6 to 16, though attendance at a specific school isn't. Public, private, or home schooling all meet the requirement.

More than half of graduates continue to pursue higher education

School culture

Students are encouraged to be active and independent learners, working on projects, participating in discussions, and developing critical and analytical skills through collaboration.

How the Danes dress

Most Danish students dress somewhere between casual and fashionable, favouring functional, minimalist streetwear suited for biking and daily life. There's no formal dress code, and comfort and practicality tend to come first.

Why do the Danes wear so much black?

No one really knows, but maybe because it hides bike grease and simplifies laundry. You don't need to follow the all-black trend, however; wear what you like.

On that note, don't let the rumours of the "stylish Danes" fool you into spending all your money on expensive fashion brands.

Most Danish students don't have the funds for that either, so cheaper brands and second-hand clothes are great choices too.

Danish culture crash course

Denmark has been a unified country for over a millennium and experienced limited immigration until the late 20th century.

As a result, Danes form a culturally close-knit, relatively homogenous society with shared values and habits, some of which might seem impolite, inefficient, or simply odd to newcomers.

A key trait is the lack of formal hierarchy.

People in authority (professors, managers, even politicians) usually introduce themselves by first name and treat others as equals regardless of status.

This reflects Denmark's egalitarian worldview, where everyone's opinion is valued.

In workplaces and classrooms alike, input is welcome from all levels; a great idea is a great idea whether it comes from the boss or the intern.

Consensus and collaboration are preferred over top-down decision-making.

Work culture emphasises work-life balance. Most Danes value having lives beyond work or study, and leisure time is built into most contracts. Working far more than the standard 37-hour week is often seen as unhealthy or unproductive rather than admirable.



Likewise, if you're sick, you're expected to stay home.

Danish society is also individualistic despite its strong welfare model. Danes see themselves as independent individuals responsible mainly for their own and their family's affairs. You'll notice they rarely discuss ethnicity, religion, or regional identity and value personal privacy. This may explain why acquaintances don't greet you on the bus or start small talk with strangers — it's not unfriendliness, just respect for personal space.

Combined with informality, this makes Danish communication direct and straightforward, often without titles or pleasantries. If you'd like to learn more about social interaction, see *Meeting the Danes* in Chapter 6.



Learn even more about Denmark:

- [Trust, community, and the Danish welfare state:](#)
- [The history of Denmark](#)
- [Culture, Etiquette and Business Practices:](#)
- [The Danish society](#)

Jantelov

Janteloven, known in English as "The Law of Jante", is a cultural concept from Aksel Sandemose's 1933 novel *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*.

It describes the mindset of small-town people in the story but is often used more broadly to explain Denmark's anti-elitist mentality and the idea of "Don't think you're better than us."

While there's some truth to it (Danes generally dislike bragging and boisterous behaviour), it's not an actual social code, and these days, it's mostly seen as an outdated cultural reference that younger Danes rarely think about or follow.

Public holidays in Denmark

Many Danish public holidays are old Catholic feast days that are no longer widely celebrated in everyday life. Easter and Christmas are the main religious holidays.

New Years Day - January 1th

NYTÅRS DAG. Everything is grey and quiet. Shops are closed.

Do it like a Dane: Eat takeout and watch the ski jumping competition on TV.

Easter: Mandu Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Monday

PÅSKE.

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.

Ascension Day

KRISTI HIMMELFARTSDAG. Falls on a Thursday, though exact 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. Marks the signing of the first constitution. Not everyone celebrates, though some political groups arrange gatherings and speeches.

Do it like a Dane: 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 on your exams – or have a party on the Sunday before, stay up late and hope to see “the dance of the Pentecostal sun”.

Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day

JUL. 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 pork 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 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.

Other dates to remember

Mardi Gras

FASTELAVN. 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”.

General Prayer Day

STORE BEDEDAG. A Friday between Easter and Ascension Day. This used to be a national Holiday as well, but was abolished as such in 2024, which led to a great amount of political discussions among the Danes.

Do it like a Dane: Eat “hot wheat buns” (varme hveder) on Thursday evening. Traditionally the buns were made to be warmed on the prayer day, since you were not supposed to work or cook on this day.

May 1st - Laybor Day

ARBEJDERNES KAMPDAG. Denmark’s version of International Workers’ 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

SKT. HANS AFTEN. Denmark’s midsummer festival marks the longest days of the year

Do it like a Dane: The longest day of the year is over and it is celebrated by participating in Skt. Hans events with huge community bonfires, in the various districts and parks. Bring a blanket, your own beverages and food and sing along or listen to the traditional songs.



School Breaks

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

The Winter Break (most often in Week 7)

Autumn Break in Week 42.

These breaks are not included in the academic year as such, but if your professor has kids, they might reschedule classes to spend the vacation with them.

First Wednesday in May - Testing the Sirens

This is not strictly speaking a public holiday, but each year, at noon on the first Wednesday in May, the air sirens are tested nationwide. If you’re not familiar with this, it will be quite the surprise.

Do it like a Dane: Relax, it’s just a test!

More about danish traditions and holidays:

www.denmark.dk/people-and-culture/danish-traditions

Things created by Danes

- LEGO
- Artificial insulin
- The loudspeaker
- Carlsberg yeast
- Wegovy

Danish tongue twisters

You may be asked to say one of these for your Danish friends' amusement:

THE CLASSIC

"Rødgrød med fløde"

(Fruit porridge with cream)

The WORST

"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)

"Får får får? Nej, får får ikke får, får får lam"

(Does sheep get sheep? No, sheep do not have sheep, sheep have lambs)

Almost all Danes speak functional English and are happy to help if you ask for directions or information... just don't try to start a personal chat at the same time.

Blogs and fun sites about Danish culture:

"A humorous guide for foreigners and their Danish friends":

www.howtoliveindenmark.com

Ten signs you've been in Denmark too long:

www.thelocal.dk/20180412/ten-signs-youve-been-in-denmark-too-long

Top 10 signs you've been in Denmark too long, the gallery:

www.thelocal.dk/galleries/lifestyle/top-10-signs-youve-been-in-denmark-too-long

Comic strips about Denmark:

www.satwcomic.com/the-world/denmark

65 Things You Need to Know About Life In Denmark:

www.oregongirlaroundtheworld.com/denmark/65-things-need-know-life-denmark/

...and though it's a bit dated, it's still relevant. Why are the Danes so strange:

www.uniavisen.dk/en/41-reasons-why-danes-are-so-strange/

Get Involved / Feedback

Do you want your ad in the International Student Survival Guide?

Send an e-mail to contact@bystudents.dk

Is there any information you are missing in this guide? Or did you notice a mistake while reading it?

Write us, then we will update it in the next edition!

Send an e-mail with your suggestion to contact@bystudents.dk and receive a beverage in Studenterhuset in return.

