

Denmark

One thing especially important to every Dane is for the individual to be truly able to use his freedom in an egalitarian society. The values of freedom and equality are inseparable in the Danish mind.

Short Facts

Area: On the global scale, today's Denmark is a small country. Its total land surface amounts to 43,075 km² (17,000 sq mi), with 7,313 km of coastline. Denmark is divided into nearly 500 separate minor or major units: the peninsula of Jutland (Jylland) alone covers 29,766, Zealand (Sjælland) covers an area of 7,439 km², and Funen (Fyn) covers 2,976 km² which are uninhabited. The Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic form a self-governing part of Denmark and have a population of 40,500. Greenland covers 341,700 km² and has about 50,000 inhabitants.

Climate: The Danish climate is usually described as a temperate oceanic climate, with mild summers and cold, rainy winters. February is generally the coldest month (the national mean is 0C/32F), while July and sometimes in August can be the warmest 16C/61F). It is often windy in Denmark and spring usually begins in April and the winter in December.



Values

Freedom and Equality



Copenhagen

Capital City

Population: 5.1 million.

Religion: The Danish constitution provides for religious freedom but about 94% of the population belong to the Lutheran Church (Folkekirken), which is a brand of the Protestant Faith. The Danes only occasionally go to church. Jutland is traditionally more church-going than Copenhagen, the capital. In recent years the number of church-goers has greatly increased, especially among youth.

Government: Denmark had Kings during the Viking period, and in 1660 the Absolute Monarchy was introduced. Peaceful changes may explain why Denmark is still a Monarchy. The Royal Family never interferes with politics and performs their duties in a most popular way.

The Royal Family today includes Queen Margaret II (born 1940) who is married to Prince Henrik (born 1934 from France). The Danish Parliament is called Folketinget and has a single chamber with 179 members (42 of them are women).

Economy: Denmark has a shortage of natural resources but has long been renowned for high quality agricultural produce. Only 7% of the people are employed in agricultural produce, but some 70% of the total land is used for farming. Dairy farming and animal husbandry are also very important.

In the last 25 years the country has experienced an industrial revolution and now specialises in advanced manufacturing industries. Important industrial products are machinery and equipment, food processing, textiles and clothing, metal products, and furniture.

History: During the 10th and 11th centuries the Vikings devastated the northern part of Europe. Incidentally they also discovered America! Later, Denmark tried to integrate with Norway and Sweden, but in 1523 the Swedes wanted a country of their own. In 1658 Sweden took the Eastern Province by force and in 1807 acquired Norway with Britain's help.

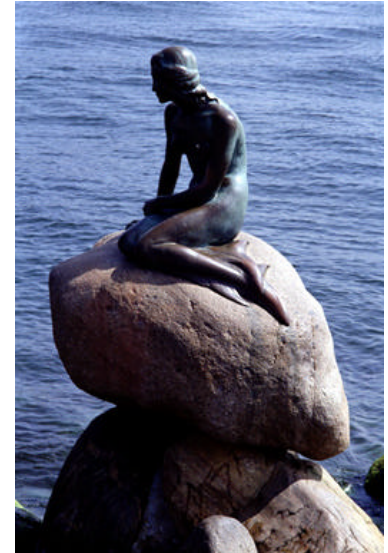
The next territorial problem was with the Germans over the Southern Provinces, Slesvig and Holsten. The Germans won the war of 1864 and took possession of Slesvig-Holsten, but after Germany's defeat in 1918, North Slesvig again became part of Denmark in 1920. After World War II, Denmark joined NATO, and in 1972 The European Community (E.C.).

Education: In 1814 Denmark became the first country in the world to have a primary school law. Ever since then, education has held a continual prominent role in Danish society.

The course at the Danish grammar school (Gymnasium) lasts three years. Entrance is after ninth or tenth primary school class. You may choose between two syllabuses, mathematics or languages.

The majority of Danish youth go to school for twelve years. Schooling and books are free of charges in all Danish public schools. Public buses or school buses are available everywhere. Social convention in schools is very relaxed. Students do not wear uniforms but they may wear whatever they want. Often they call their teachers by their first name.

Ordinarily, students go to school for 30 hours a week, plus they have homework. Exchange students are placed in the tenth grade of the primary school or in the first or second class of the grammar school, depending on their age, interests and abilities. School starts at the beginning of August and ends in June.



**Importance
to the Individual**



**Close-knit
and Stable families**

Family Life: Families in Denmark are in many cases still close-knit and quite stable. A distinguishing aspect of the Danish culture is the importance given to the individual, a concept taught and honoured in Danish homes. Generally, children are taught principles and then allowed to govern themselves.

Recreation: The Danish people are avid readers, and the country is one of the leading book-buying nations in the world. Denmark ranks first in the number of books borrowed from public libraries. They also have a great love for music.

Danes enjoy sports, but most sports are played at an amateur level. Although many sports familiar in other countries are also enjoyed in Denmark, football (soccer) is probably the most popular.

Travel during holidays and vacation time is very popular.

In Denmark contact between young people is rather informal. When you go out for fun you normally pay for yourself.