



# DANISH CULTURE

DANISH CULTURE IS RELAXED AND COLLECTIVE VALUES ARE BUILT ON TRUST, SECURITY AND COOPERATION. VIEWS ON RELIGION AND POLITICS ARE RATHER LIBERAL, AND HUMOUR IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN DANES. THE SUPPORTIVE DANISH WELFARE STATE GRANTS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL, THUS PROVIDING A STRONG FEELING OF SECURITY AND BELONGING.

## WHAT ARE DANES LIKE?

Generally, Danes have very liberal views on sex, religion and politics compared to most Europeans. However, they are also rule-bound and complying with the norms is important and appreciated. Wealth in Denmark is equally distributed, so there are relatively few billionaires or really poor people. Attitudes towards success and money are humble, and consequently bragging is unusual and socially unacceptable. Most Danes are outspoken and direct; they are used to having open discussions and being honest about what they think. Danes love humour and it is a

central part of Danish culture. Comedians make fun of famous people, and even the royal family, to their audience's amusement. Irony is an important part of Danish humour and conversation, which may take some time getting used to for internationals. Danes may not initiate small talk with strangers themselves, but Danes are polite and will engage in conversation if they are spoken to.

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

Altruism is a core value in Denmark. Danes are quite generous with those in need all around the world, so they often do vol-

unteer work or simply donate money for charities. Moreover, Danes are increasingly concerned about global issues, so they buy fair trade and environmentally friendly products and recycle more than the European average.

## THE "HYGGE" CONCEPT

When foreigners are asked to describe Danish culture, a special concept comes to mind: "hygge". Linked to cosiness and warmth, "hygge" is normally associated with being comfortable and relaxed, as well as with having fun with close friends or loved ones, often while enjoying good



food and something to drink. Candles are also connected to the idea of "hygge", and Danes love lighting them, especially when they have guests over.

### SOCIALISING CULTURE IN DENMARK

Danes have a reputation for being reserved and difficult to connect with outside the office. They may not believe in superficial friendships, but they do collect friends who are close and loyal, so don't hold back. Socialising in Denmark is generally casual, as Danes prefer to skip formalities. However, punctuality is extremely important. When Danes want to see their friends, they usually agree where and when to meet, instead of showing up unannounced. Most work places organise get-togethers a couple of times a year, especially around summer and christmas, where employees and managers can have fun and get to know each other across departments.

### FACTS ABOUT DANISH CULTURE:

- \ Denmark is historically a monarchic country. In fact, it has one of the oldest kingdoms in the world
- \ The state religion of Denmark is Lutheran Protestantism and 79% of Danes are members of the National Church. However, most Danes do not consider themselves religious
- \ Modern design is an intrinsic part of Danish culture. Many Danish products are considered design icons of the 20th century, such as the egg chair by Arne Jacobsen and the PH-lamp by Poul Henningsen
- \ The most internationally recognised Danish architect is Jørn Utzon, who designed the iconic Opera House in Sydney
- \ The most famous contributor to Danish literature is the fairy tale author and poet Hans Christian Andersen
- \ The Tivoli Garden in Copenhagen are the most popular cultural attraction in Denmark. In 2012, more than four million people visited it

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