



Dansk ICYE

International Cultural Youth Exchange

The background image shows a coastal scene at dusk or dawn. In the foreground, there are tall, golden-brown grasses. The middle ground features a calm blue sea with a small white boat. In the distance, a row of seven white wind turbines stands on the horizon under a soft, orange-hued sky.

ICYE Denmark

National Profile 2024-2025

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Dear future volunteer

We would like to welcome you to spend your exchange period in Denmark. As a volunteer here you will meet the Danish people and culture in a way you could never do as a tourist.

We have prepared this profile to give you an idea of our country and what you can expect during your stay here. We hope that this information will answer some basic questions you may have about Denmark and Danes.

If you have any other questions about living and working in Denmark, you're welcome to contact us.

We look forward to meeting you!

About Denmark

History

The ice of the last ice age covered the area now known as Denmark, but about 15.000 years ago the climate became a little warmer. Consequently, the ice melted which attracted hunters and food gatherers to come to the area and form small primitive settlements. This was the beginning of the civilization that later became the Kingdom of Denmark.



Over thousands of years, these small tribes developed into an agricultural civilisation. A change occurred in the period 800-1050 AD, known as the Viking Age, where the Danes developed great skills in shipbuilding. They used their great skills to raid and conquer parts of Europe, but they also excelled in trading along the European coasts and rivers. During this period, the notorious Vikings were a great power in Europe and the territory of the Danish kingdom was much wider than it is today.

In 964 AD the Danish King Harald Bluetooth converted the Danes to Christianity which is considered the birth of The Kingdom of Denmark. He erected one of the Runic Stones in the town of Jelling as a symbol of this transition.

In the Middle Ages Denmark developed as an agricultural Christian kingdom with three dominating powers: church, king, and manor.

But with the Reformation from Catholicism to Protestantism around 1535 the king strengthened his status. The following 300 years Denmark lost various wars and therefore also a great amount of territory. This period was also the beginning of a long democratisation of Danish society, which resulted in a democratic constitution in 1849.



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There was still a long way to go for the Danes, and not until the end of the 19th century, after the unofficial dictatorship of Estrup, did Danish politics start working as a modern democracy. Similar to the rest of Europe at this time, the standards of living rose, and people migrated from the country into the cities to find jobs in the industry and service sector. The workers joined unions, and the Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokratiet) became the largest political party at the beginning of the 20th century. All this was the basis for a welfare state, similar to the one in Norway and Sweden.



Denmark did not participate in the First World War that took place from 1914 to 1918. During this war, the Danish women received the right to vote in 1915. With the German occupation in 1940, the Second World War came to Denmark. A lot of Danes got involved in the Danish



resistance movement against the Germans which is why Denmark was considered part of the winning Allied Forces.

Today Denmark remains a welfare state, perhaps grown more liberal and modern along with the expansion of the European Union, of which Denmark became a member in 1973.

Geography

Denmark is a small country located in Scandinavia in northern Europe with a landmass of only 43.000 square kilometres. It is the 132nd largest country in the world. The landmass consists of the peninsula Jutland (Jylland) and the two main islands Funen (Fyn) and Zealand (Sjælland). In addition to these, there are 441 small islands scattered around in the Danish territory.

This small country is surrounded by the two major seas, The Baltic Sea and The North Sea. Despite the small land area, Denmark has one of the longest coastlines in Europe with a total of 7314 km. This means that no location is further from the coast than 52 km.

In general, the Danish landscape is flat with little elevation. However, this does not mean that the geography is boring. You can experience a great variety of lakes, fields, green forests, good beaches, sand dunes, coves, and sheer cliffs.

Denmark houses 5,8 million people of which 1,3 million live in or around the capital of

Copenhagen. Other main cities are Aarhus (360.000 citizens), Aalborg (220.000 citizens) and Odense (204.000 citizens). Additionally, the Kingdom of Denmark comprises Greenland and the Faroe Islands, located in the North Atlantic Ocean, which both have wide political autonomy.

Climate

In Denmark, we experience four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter – all with different characteristics.

Spring runs from March to May and the weather is very shifty. It can be rather cold and windy but also sunny. Late spring all the flowers begin to blossom and the trees get new green leaves.



Summer starts in June and ends in August. In this period the weather is mildly warm and sunny with temperatures ranging from 15 to 30° C, but with some rainy days in between.

From September to November, it is autumn. At this time of year, you will never know what weather to expect. It can be mild, rainy, stormy, sunny, snowy etc. The average temperature is 10-15° C.

Winter runs from December to February. It is very cold with temperatures from 5 to -10° C. The winters vary and sometimes there is snow for a full month making the landscape white and beautiful, while other winters barely get any snow making it very wet and grey. Rain is also very common in this season, which can make the roads full of wet snow called sleet.

To many foreigners the climate often seems cold all year round because of the strong Western wind, so bring warm sweaters and jackets to protect you from the wind. Danes are often outside during all seasons and have a famous expression saying: “There’s no



Climate & Weather Averages in Aarhus, Denmark. timeanddate.com.
<https://www.timeanddate.com/weather/denmark/aarhus/climate>

bad weather, there's only wrong clothing".

As you might have figured out already from reading about the climate, Denmark is very wet. All seasons have rain, some more than others and it rains on average 179 days of the year.

The temperature varies a lot and one month can have temperatures up to 30 degrees high and a low of 9 degrees – all within the SAME month! The graph only includes average highs and lows and not the occasional variation, which is common.

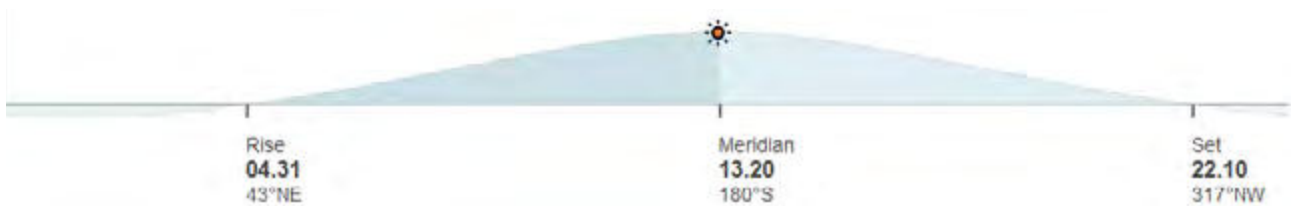
If you are more interested in the temperatures in Denmark, please visit the website www.timeanddate.com where you find monthly highs and lows from 1985 to 2015. Here you can also see the statistics about rain.

Daylight

The hours of daylight vary a lot between the seasons as summer has up to 18 hours of light in 24 hours whereas winters are grey and dark with only 7 hours of daylight.

If you plan to spend a winter in Denmark you can expect to go to work in the morning when it is dark and when you finish work, it is dark again. Not seeing the daylight can make some people depressed, but Danes try to compromise with tea, blankets, hot chocolate, and other cosy indoor activities. It is the season of "hygge". The beautiful Christmas lights in the different towns and in people's gardens also help to brighten the days until it gets lighter outside again.

Below you see the sunrise and sunset during summer. These hours are for the summer solstice at the end of June, when we have the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The sun rises at 4:31 in the morning and sets at 22:10 in the evening. During this time, the sky never becomes fully dark.



Sunrise, Sunset, and Daylength. timeanddate.com.
<https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/denmark/aarhus>

The next diagram shows the sunrise and sunset during winter. These hours are for the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year at the end of December. The sun rises at 8:50 in the morning and sets at 15:44 in the afternoon.



Sunrise, Sunset, and Daylength. timeanddate.com.
<https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/denmark/aarhus>

Politics

Denmark is a constitutional monarchy which means that the monarch cannot independently perform political acts. The Danish monarchy is one of the oldest in the world and can be traced back more than a thousand years. The current monarch is Queen Margrethe II who has reigned since 1972. The Queen's main tasks are to represent Denmark abroad and to be a figurehead at home.

The political system is a multi-party structure where several parties are represented in the Danish parliament, the Folketing. Ten parties are currently represented in the Parliament without including representatives from Greenland and Faroe Islands.

The current government is a multiple-party government consisting of the Social-democratic Party (Socialdemokratiet), the Left party (Venstre) and the Moderates party (Moderaterne). The parties do not solely have the majority of votes and are, therefore, dependent on the corporation from other parties to implement new legislation. Since June 27, 2019, the government has been headed by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen (Socialdemokratiet), who was re-elected for a second period on the 4th of November 2022.

Parliamentary elections are held at least every four years and all Danish citizens above the age of 18 have the right to vote.



Christmas.

The second-largest religious community is the Muslims who represent about 5,5% of the Danish population. Furthermore, a variety of other religions are represented in Denmark but all together they do not exceed 2% of the population. Examples of other religions: Catholicism, Judaism and Jehovah's Witnesses.

There is an ongoing, vigorous debate regarding the influence, democratic compatibility, and public appearance of religion in today's Denmark. Islam is a particular point of debate as well as Christianity.

Religion

Denmark has freedom of religion but about 74,7% of all Danes are members of the Danish National Church which is an Evangelical Lutheran church. Despite the high percentage, most Danes do not lead an active church life and they mainly attend church for special occasions like baptisms, weddings, funerals, and

Language

The only official language in Denmark is Danish which is the national language of the Danish people. However, there are several minority languages spoken through the territory: German, Arabic, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Nordic languages and many more.

A large majority of Danes also speak English as a second language. Because foreign movies and TV shows rarely are dubbed, Danes experience an immense exposure to the English language, which often gives them a high level of English. In Denmark, children in schools learn English from 1st grade whereas the elder generations find it more difficult to master the English language.



It is important to notice, that Danish still is the most common language spoken in Denmark and the language you will learn during your stay. At the beginning of your stay, you will inevitably speak English to communicate but in time, you might find a way to master the Danish language, especially if you are working with younger children.

Many foreigners find Danish a difficult language to learn, but nevertheless, we recommend that you learn a basic to intermediate level of Danish because it will make it easier for you to mingle with the Danes and become a part of the Danish society.

A peculiarity in the Danish language is the use of the special letters Æ, Ø and Å which a lot of foreigners have problems pronouncing.

Danish is hard to learn but you should keep on trying – no matter what, Danes usually feel flattered when someone makes the effort to learn their strange language.

Economics

Denmark has a well-developed social welfare system, which provides many advantages such as free education, free medical help, retirement pension, unemployment support, social benefits etc. The welfare system is covered through taxes, and as a result, the tax percentage in Denmark is rather high. The tax system works so that people who earn the most, pay the most in taxes. The lowest tax percentage on personal income is 35-40%. Even though Danes often complain about this, the vast majority would not want to change the current welfare system into a “user-pay” system.

Furthermore, all goods and services are taxed with a VAT (value-added tax) of 25%. Altogether the taxes and tariffs in Denmark are among the highest in the world, alongside our Nordic neighbours. The result is that living in Denmark is rather expensive regarding the costs of food, housing, transportation, and other services.

Food

The Danish food culture has changed a lot during the last 30 years because of globalisation and a change of habits. In general, Danes usually have three main meals a day, but in between the meals, they may drink coffee or tea and enjoy snacks, such as cakes, bread, or fruits.

The first meal is breakfast. Almost everyone in Denmark eats breakfast at home, and it generally consists of cereals with milk or yoghurt, porridge or toasted bread with cheese or jam, accompanied by coffee or tea.



At noon, the Danes have their lunch at work or school. The lunch break is normally only half an hour, so it is very common to bring a packed lunch from home, consisting of the so-called smørrebrød and maybe some fruit or vegetable. Smørrebrød is an open sandwich made of rye bread topped with a variety of cold cuts e.g. slices of meat, fish, egg, or the Danish speciality leverpostej (a kind of paté). Salads and sandwiches have also made their way into the Danish lunches.



Danes are very fond of sweets and cake in many different varieties are very common for extra “hygge” during the day, in the evening, or at the weekends. This is often accompanied by coffee, tea, or another beverage.

Around 6 or 7 pm, it is time for dinner. This is normally the main meal of the day eaten at home with the family. Traditionally, it consists of a dish of meat or fish with vegetables (especially potatoes), pasta or rice at the side. Brown gravy is very common for traditional dishes with meat. Fresh salads are also very common as a side dish.



Foreign dishes are also popular, ranging from sushi, Thai, and Indian food to American, Mexican and – most commonly – Italian food.

As mentioned before, Denmark is an expensive country and as a foreigner, it might be a challenge to find the best and cheapest place to buy food. If you want to find the cheapest Danish supermarkets, look for Lidl, 365 Discount, Netto and Rema1000. There you can find most of what you need, and these shops are also easy to find around in the towns.

More expensive supermarkets are SuperBrugsen, Kvickly, Føtex and Bilka. Some of the products in these supermarkets have higher quality, and the good thing about them is that they have a greater variety of food and brands compared to the cheaper supermarkets.

Whether you choose low or high budget supermarkets, the quality of food in Denmark is in general very high. The authorities have strict rules for food and beverage sold in Denmark, which is a guarantee to all consumers.

Cultural Life

When volunteering in Denmark you should not let high entrance fees and expensive tickets be an obstacle for you when you want to go out and enjoy cultural events. Danish cultural life is very diverse. Whether you like theatres, movies, museums or music, there is something for everyone and at all price levels.

Music - You can check out www.gaffa.dk to see concerts venues, band descriptions, tour plans and music reviews of both Danish and international artists. For bigger concerts, you can buy tickets online at www.ticketmaster.dk or www.billetlugen.dk.



In the main cities, there are a lot of local venues where you can listen to all kinds of music. Moreover, many pubs or bars have free music events in the evenings. For more information on these, please visit your local library, other cultural hubs or ask at your local bar.

Music festivals - There are a lot of different music festivals in Denmark mainly during summertime. Attending a music festival is a great way to get close to Danish culture and have a great time.

At these festivals, the Danes forget about their shyness and their reserved attitude, everybody parties together and it is something people talk about for a long time. You can find info about the different Danish music festivals on www.festivalkits.dk/blogs (note: not all festivals are included – but the major ones are).



Movies - Cinema tickets can be a bit expensive, normally 95-140 DKK, but in some cinemas, they have special discounts, e.g. if you go early or show a student id. You can buy the tickets either at the cinema itself, by telephone or online.

The website www.kino.dk contains info about most of the cinemas, movies, their running time etc. and you can also buy tickets here.

During summer there are free outdoor movies at different locations in the bigger Danish cities, called Zulu Sommerbio. It is a great chance to gather your friends, your picnic gear and watch some of the year's most popular movies in the open air – for free! Check out zulu.tv2.dk/sommerbio.

Theatre - All over the country, you can experience a great variety of shows in the different theatres – from ballets and operas to stand-up comedy and musicals. You can find information about the shows and other cultural performances on www.kultunaut.dk.

Leisure

Even though you come to Denmark to do voluntary work, you will have plenty of leisure time as well. We recommend that you make some use of this time instead of just sitting at home. Besides the obvious fact of avoiding getting bored, being active in your free time is fruitful in other ways. You will have the opportunity to get to know more about the Danish way of life and by becoming part of social communities, you will inevitably meet new people and get a better social network in Denmark.

You can find several associations and clubs that offer leisure activities, ranging from sport and music to all kinds of evening classes.



You can find information about the different evening/afternoon courses and lectures on aof.dk and www.fof.dk. If you are interested in sport, check out www.dgi.dk where there is information about different sports and Danish teams.

Moreover, you can always ask your host family or contact person for good advice on leisure activities. They are experts in their local area!

Transport

Public transport in Denmark covers all parts of the country and is very well organised – but rather expensive. A great source on how to get from A to B in Denmark is the website www.rejseplanen.dk. It shows all timetables for trains and local buses, calculates the fastest route as well as the price and allows you to buy your ticket online. It can also be downloaded as an app to any smart phone, which is useful when you are on the go.

For long-distance journeys in Denmark, the train is normally the first option – but also the expensive choice. There are two train companies in Denmark: DSB and Arriva. Prices, routes, and discount options can be found at their website www.dsb.dk, arriva.dk, or any train station.

A cheaper, but sometimes slower, option is buses. Companies such as Flixbus (global.flixbus.com) or Kombardo Expressen (www.kombardoexpressen.dk) offer cheap travel between all the bigger cities in Denmark.

For local buses, the different regions of Denmark have their own bus system and



therefore you must visit different websites to find information about the buses or check Rejseplanen as mentioned earlier.

Lastly, Denmark has a popular car share service called GoMore, which is very easy to use once you have downloaded the app to your phone. Most often, this is the cheapest option although the long-distance buses have become very affordable over the past years - especially between Jylland and Sjælland. Lastly, once you arrive in Denmark, you will get more information about transportation.



Locally, the most popular form of transportation is cycling! Denmark is one of the countries in Europe where the inhabitants cycle the most and the Danes use their bicycle for 18 % of all transport journeys - compared to only 1 % of the Americans. In all the bigger cities there is a great net of bike paths along the roads and in the countryside, there is a lot of bicycle routes. So, if you want to try one of the healthy traditions of the Danish way of life, you must go cycling.

Despite the number of cyclists, the car is very important to an average Dane. Even though 38,7 % of all Danish families do not have a car, there are 3 million cars in Denmark. Of course, it is possible to rent a car if you want to go sightseeing, but it might be just as cheap and easy to use public transport or bike.

Traditions

Christmas - The most common tradition in Denmark is Christmas, which is celebrated on the 24th of December in the evening (juleaften). The Christmas celebration already starts from mid-November where the country is filled with lights & decorations and the Danes start their Christmas shopping, visit Christmas markets etc.



Even though most Danes rarely practice their religion in their everyday life, many people go to church in the afternoon on Christmas Eve.

Afterwards, the Christmas dinner is prepared at home with the family. The traditional Danish Christmas dinner consists of pork, duck or turkey with potatoes and red cabbage followed by the dessert risalamande (rice pudding with crushed almonds). There is a tradition of hiding a whole almond in the rice pudding and whoever gets it must show it to the table to 'win' the extra present. Afterwards, it is a tradition to walk around the lit Christmas tree singing songs and carols and, finally,



people exchange gifts.

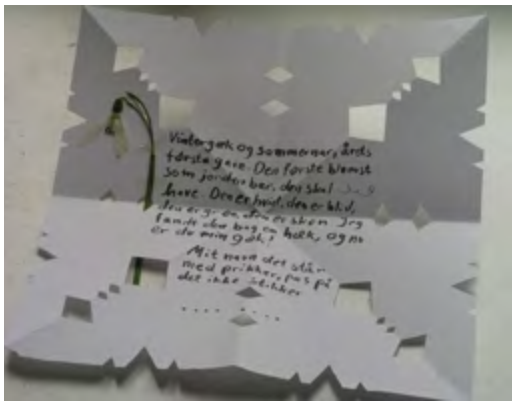
Another Christmas tradition is the Christmas parties (julefrokoster) with the colleagues at work, classmates, friends, and family. It often includes a lot of different dishes starting with fish, then meat, all served on rye bread with an alcoholic schnapps. Moreover, these parties are normally when people let their hair down and include alcohol, different games, and dancing.

New Year - Naturally, Danes also celebrate New Year's Eve (nytårsaften). Many Danes gather around the TV at 6 pm to hear the Queen's New Year's speech, hereafter they have a big dinner together with family or friends.

Again at midnight, everybody gathers in front of the TV with a glass of champagne to welcome the new year to the sound of the big clock at Copenhagen's City Hall.



Afterwards, the sky explodes with fireworks and the party continues until the next morning.



Easter - During Easter (påske) there are different traditions such as decorating eggs or eating chocolate eggs or chocolate bunnies.

Some people go to church but most people who celebrate Easter host dinner parties (påskefrokost) with friends and family.

Children write letters to loved ones, where the paper has been cut into a beautiful pattern and they write a small poem. Often a small flower, a snowdrop, is included and pressed in the letter. At the end of the letter, instead of signing with their name, they put dots replicating the number of letters in their name. If the receiver cannot guess who the letter is from before Easter, they will have to buy a chocolate egg for the child.

Midsummer - Sankt Hans is the 23rd of June and is a celebration of the longest day of the year. In the evening it is normal to light a bonfire in gardens, parks or at the beach and sing traditional Danish songs.

Usually, there is a homemade witch on a broomstick sitting on top of the bonfire. Traditionally that was to scare witches and wizards as they were believed to be more present in holy nights as Sankt Hans.

As in almost every other Danish festive occasion, great food is a must!



The Danes

Reserved Danes

People from abroad often say that they find it difficult to get in contact with Danes and make close friendships. This is a paradox because many Danes find it interesting and even cool to have friends from abroad. But why is this impression about Danes being reserved so widespread among foreigners?

Some explanations for this could be a general shyness among Danes to express themselves in a different language or maybe a lack of energy in a hectic weekday schedule. Furthermore, it takes Danes a long time to fully invest in new friendships but once they do, you have a friend for life – so be patient.

Punctuality and planning

Punctuality is a pillar of Danish mentality and to be late in Denmark is showing bad manners. In some countries, it is okay to be 15 minutes or half an hour late for an appointment, but in Denmark, it is disrespectful and not accepted, especially if you are always late. Therefore, if you do know that you will be late for an appointment, it is best to call the people who are waiting for you.

Danes, in general, like to plan what they are going to do each day. They prefer some degree of regularity, and they like to plan their schedules (even social and informal activities). Danes generally get confused and even stressed if their plans are changed all the time, if they cannot make plans, or if something unexpected happens.



The need for privacy

Most Danes require privacy and time on their own. They like to be social and spend time with friends and family, but at the same time, they need their own space. Danes see themselves as independent and they prefer to control their own life and handle personal challenges on their own.

In Denmark, it is normal to move out the childhood home when you are 18-20 years old, so do not expect to have host brothers or sisters that age or older in the house daily.

Rules and the “culture of agreeing”

Danes generally respect rules and legislation. You might notice that Danes strictly obey these rules and breaking them is socially unacceptable. So do not get frightened if you experience a strong reaction if you ever break a rule – big or small. Many Danes try to avoid conflicts; they do not like to utter their opinions if they know that the others around them will be critical about their point of view. Even though Danes claim to be individualists, in many situations they want to follow the majority. Compared to many other European cultures, the Danish could be called “culture of agreeing” as they rarely show disagreement in public.

Gender equality and sexuality

Gender equality is an important issue for Danes, and that is why you will not encounter a lot of men with typical gentleman manners towards ladies, nor many women who appreciate these gestures. In housework, equality is also important, and it is expected that both men and women help out. Most likely, you will experience this as an exchangee in Denmark, where the family, no matter your gender, will ask you to help with the housekeeping.

Within this context, the Danish focus on gender equality has led the Danes to generally be very accepting of all sexual orientations. Denmark is one of the most liberal countries concerning rights for homosexual people. Same sex couples can get married at the city hall and in churches if the priest approves, and in the bigger towns, there are LGBTQ+ organizations, cafés, and clubs. Many cities also have a yearly Pride parade.



In 1989 Denmark was the first country in the world to legalize registered marriages between same-sex couples.

Humour

It can take quite a while to understand Danish humour. A lot of Danes use irony and sarcasm when making jokes and if you are new to this kind of humour, it is important to keep in mind that it is not meant to hurt anyone.

Worklife

Many Danes identify themselves with their professional lives and their work is important to their life quality. The workload of most common jobs is about 37 hours a week, from 8 am to 4 pm, with a 30 minute lunch break during noon. Most workers are organized in labour unions, which play a significant role in society. The workers have a wide set of rights regarding the nature of the work, safety, dismissal, etc.

In Denmark, employees have high work ethics and are very initiative in completing the workload. It happens regularly that an employee suggests new ways of approaching work tasks as well as offering their help to any given problem. As a volunteer, you will sometimes experience that you need to take the initiative or reach out to get a task. Therefore, it is important to speak up if you do not know what to do or if you have any ideas – they will always be welcomed.



Family

A typical family consists of parents and one, two or three children. The family members do not spend a lot of time together during the daytime, because the parents usually work full-time while the children are at school or kindergarten. In the afternoon, all family members are busy seeing friends, doing sports etc.

It is therefore important for the families to get together for dinner, which often is the only time during the day that they have the opportunity to talk with one another. In the evenings, the families focus on relaxing and many find watching television enables them to do just that.

About ICYE Denmark

Structure

The structure of ICYE Denmark differs from other national committees because Danish volunteers in the organisation play a very important role concerning the management of the programme. The board of managers is the main controlling organ and has the overall responsibility for the programme in Denmark.



We have subgroups in charge of running the camps, recruitment of contact arranging activities and events, improving the local committees etc. All work done by the board of managers and the subgroups is voluntary (unpaid) and is mainly carried out by returnees and people generally interested in cultural exchange.

For you as a volunteer, the most important subgroups are the Cross-Cultural Trainers (CCT) and the local branches. The members of CCT are responsible for the programmes at the camps and they will help you reflect upon

your stay in Denmark. They are there to help you with difficult situations, understanding Danish culture and much more.

There are 6 local branches, and you will be part of one of them, according to which part of Denmark you will be living. They arrange free activities for you and other volunteers in the area.

You will also get a Contact Person in your local area, who is your ICYE buddy, responsible for helping you understand the Danish way of life.



The office

ICYE Denmark's office is situated in Aarhus, the second-largest Danish city.

The office has 9 paid staff members, one ESC volunteer and often also a university intern. They oversee the administrative work, e.g. making sure you receive your pocket money every month.

The office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 am to 3 pm and Fridays from 9 am to 1 pm.

The Programme

Camps

During the exchange year, ICYE Denmark will provide different camps to provide you with information about and preparing you for volunteering in Denmark, to help you process your experiences, and to share them with other people.



For the 12-months programme, you will have an introduction camp "On-arrival", Mid-year camp "Mid-term", and an End-of-year camp.

If you have joined the 6-months programme you will only have an On-arrival camp and an end-of-year camp.

At the introduction camp you will:

- Meet the other volunteers who are in Denmark with ICYE
- Learn about Danish culture
- Have a language introduction course

You will at the mid-year camp:

- Spend time with the other volunteers
- Reflect on how it is to be in Denmark

You will at the end-of-year camp:

- Evaluate your exchange year in Denmark
- Get a chance to say goodbye to the group of ICYE volunteers and Danish volunteers
- Reflect on what you have gained from your stay



Host families

Some of our volunteers will be living with a host family and this is a good way to get to know Danish customs and culture. If you are staying with a host family, you will be received by a family who wants you to get involved in their family life. You can expect the host family to be interested in other cultures.

Other volunteers will be living at the project. This is most likely if you volunteer at an "Efterskole", a Danish type of boarding school, where you will have your own room.

All our host families volunteered to host a volunteer although the families receive a small amount from ICYE Denmark to cover some of the basic expenses, it does not cover the full costs of having an extra person living in their house. Most families choose to host because they have a son/daughter who is abroad or because they are interested in teaching a foreigner about Denmark.

Some volunteers will change families during their stay, as many host families cannot open their homes for a consecutive 12 months.

If or when you have to change host family, we will try our best to find one close to the area of your former family, so you do not have to start from scratch once again with work and friends.

We ask you to try your hardest to become a part of the family to get the best experiences with your host family. The following advice might help you to become a part of the host family:



- Spend time with the host family. Try to share activities, whatever they may be, e.g. walking, cooking, shopping, or doing sports. Even watching Danish TV may be seen as a family activity – even if you do not understand at first, it will be seen as a nice gesture and may teach you something.
- Tell them about your home country and share your experiences from your daily life. Cook traditional dishes from your home country to the host family.
- Assist the domestic household, such as cleaning, tidying up, washing clothes, etc. Usually, any contribution will be appreciated. In Denmark, it is normal that all family members take part in the housekeeping and minimal requirements are typical that all clean up after themselves and clean/tidy their own room, but also help out in the shared spaces such as the kitchen and living room.

It is expected that you show your willingness to help in and around the house as your host family rarely would ask for it. In the Danish culture, you help each other out – a solidarity lifestyle – without having to verbalise it. So, take the initiative – ask if you can help - you might learn something new!

Most host families live in rural areas so it's likely you will be living in a town with approximately 10-30.000 inhabitants or a village close to such a town. Your project will likely be in the same town or a neighbouring town.

Language course

Danish is a difficult language for many volunteers. The course included in the programme is 30+ hours of teaching running for 2-3 months in your local area. As these classes are a part of the programme, they are included in your weekly working hours.

There is a deposit of 2.000 DKK to participate in the language classes. This money will be returned when the classes are completed.

If you wish to keep on learning Danish, you can continue to participate in the classes after the first module is completed - however these extra classes must be outside your working hours at the project.

The best way to practice your Danish is to interact with your host family, project, and other Danes. Sometimes they will change into English to help you – but that is a misunderstood help - so do not be afraid to ask them to speak Danish, if you want to practice.

The Danes are usually very impressed when a foreigner puts an effort into learning Danish although they sometimes are not patient and will switch to English.



Extra voluntary work

It is possible to do extra voluntary work in your spare time during your stay in Denmark. The voluntary work must be consistent with the Danish government's definition of voluntary work. According to this definition, voluntary work is non-commercial which means that the voluntary work must not fill the duty of a paid employee.

- You can work in a public department or work for voluntary organisations.
- You cannot work for a private company. Some voluntary work requires a high level in Danish.

If you wish to do voluntary work in Denmark you need to bring a copy of your criminal record, because the workplace usually wants to see it.

Please note that the kind of voluntary work you can carry out in Denmark is not related to people in actual need, but ordinary people and workplaces.

To read more about all the available voluntary jobs in Denmark, please see the website frivilligjob.dk



Rules of travel

At the end of your exchange year, you have one month free to travel as you like, 15 days if you join the 6 months programme. During your stay, you can ask for permission to go for a few extended weekends, apart from travels together with your host family, with your workplace, or during public holidays where your workplace has days off.

However, you need to consult ICYE Denmark in advance if you need to leave Denmark and permission can only be granted if the family or work agrees with your leave. Please understand that due to the requirement of the Danish immigration authorities, ICYE Denmark needs to be aware of the whereabouts of our volunteers at any time.

Money

Every month you will receive 1000 DKK (about 130 Euro/140 USD) from ICYE Denmark, which will be transferred to your Danish bank account. The easiest and cheapest way to get money is to open a Danish bank account which further is useful for leisure refunds etc.

1 Euro is about 7.50 DKK

1 USD is about 6.80 DKK

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All international credit cards are accepted in Denmark but there might be a service fee, which emphasises the positives of having a Danish bank account while you live in Denmark. Living in Denmark is expensive so do not expect to be able to buy a lot for your pocket money.

FUN FACT

The Danish coins 1 kr, 2 kr and 5 kr has a hole in the middle.

One Danish krone (1 DKK) consists of 100 øre. Currently, you can encounter the following coins: 50øre, 1 krone, 2 kroner, 5, 10, 20 kroner. Notes come in 50 kroner, 100, 200, 500 and 1000 kroner.

Many Danes primarily use their credit/debit card in purchasing situations and the majority, especially younger people, do not carry money. All shops, supermarkets, cafés, restaurants, and activities will, therefore, accept card payment.

Many aspects of Danish society have become increasingly “paperless”. Credit card payments or the Danish “MobilePay” app can be used to buy most things, e.g. discounts on train tickets online, which can only be bought online and cannot be bought at the train station using cash.



Special requirements



Asthma, allergy, or diabetes: If you suffer from one of these or other diseases that demand a regular use of medicine, then please check whether the ICYE insurance or your medical insurance back home will cover expenses for medicine bought in Denmark.

Injections: If you need others to give you daily/weekly injections, please state this in the application.

Please send detailed information listing the things you cannot eat and give details as to how strict your diet must be.

It may be advisable for you to bring your supply of medicine, if possible, enough to last the entire year or check whether you can get the same kind of medicine in Denmark.

Contact ICYE Denmark if you want us to check whether your medicine is available in Denmark or not.

Health Insurance

You are covered by the insurance policy taken out by ICYE. Detailed information can be obtained from the ICYE committee in your country.

During your exchange year in Denmark, you obtain the same rights as all Danish citizens to receive free treatment under the health security system.

Consultations by a physician are free, but medicine must be paid in part by you at first. If the doctor prescribes you medicine, the expenses will thereafter be refunded by the ICYE insurance.

Appointments to dentists in Denmark is only half covered by the free treatments under the health security system. The other half is paid by the patient. In case of a dental emergency, the ICYE insurance may cover the costs.



For receiving the reimbursement, the doctor has to fill out the insurance papers, which you can get at the office of ICYE Denmark.

Visa

Before coming to Denmark, you must have a residence permit/visa, except if you are an EU/EEA citizen. You will be sent a separate document with more information about visa and permits to Denmark once a project for you has been confirmed and your visa process should start.

The visa process can take up to 3 months for the Danish government to process. This is why we set the following deadlines for receiving applications:

ARRIVAL TO DENMARK	DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION
<u>August</u>	<u>April 1st</u>
<u>January</u>	<u>October 1st</u>

Expectations

What to expect from ICYE Denmark

- Introduction camp
- Mid-year evaluation camp (for 12 months stay only)
- End-of-year evaluation camp
- A contact person
- 1000 DKK monthly pocket money
- Travel expenses relating to your work, language courses, and for attending ICYE Camps covered
- 30+ hours of a Danish language course
- A hosting organisation with your best interests in mind
- Danish volunteers will do their best to help you



What we do not offer

- Paid work
- Travel agency services
- Excursions
- University studies or other further education resulting in a diploma or certificate
- Professional skills resulting in a diploma

What we expect from you

- Make an effort in learning Danish - We know that Danish is not the most useful language outside Scandinavia, but once you speak the language it is easier to understand the Danish culture, the Danes and avoid being a stranger among Danes

- That you put the same effort and initiative in your voluntary work as if it had been paid work in your own country
- That you show responsibility towards the work placement you attend
- That you try to adjust to the host family's way of life by immersing yourself in the house routines



- That you show initiative during your exchange year
- That you are between 18 and 30 years old, due to visa regulations
- That you are aware, that you will be considered an ambassador of your country and ICYE when participating in the programme

What to bring

- A sleeping bag (required - you will need one for the ICYE camps including the introduction camp)
- Copy of the criminal record (required)
- Raincoat/umbrella
- Warm clothes including wind prove layers
- Warm and water-resistant shoes or rain boots



Nice to bring

- Small pillow (not required, but will be nice for the ICYE camps, where only a mattress is provided)
- Typical things from your country - to show others
- Information about your country - to tell others about at the camp and your project
- Cooking recipes - if you want to share your food culture with the Danes
- Small gifts for your host family
- Photos of your family and friends

Rules for Volunteers

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You have joined the ICYE programme and like in any programme there are limitations, rules, and regulations which you must follow to be part of the programme. The rules and regulations have been established to enable us - you and ICYE Denmark - to accomplish the goals of the ICYE programme together.

Our aim as your host organisation is to create a trustful relation and atmosphere in which open and honest dialogue is possible. However, the success of your volunteer year is very depended on you and your attitude. We expect you to read the following rules very carefully and then return your signed agreement.

GENERAL

1. I will obey the laws of my host country Denmark. If I do not obey the laws, I will be held responsible for all costs; this includes all costs referring to deportation.
2. The residence visa does not allow me to hold a paid job. If a volunteer is discovered working illegally, they will be deported. This means that I will have to leave Denmark and the Schengen.
3. I will not use ANY drugs for recreational purposes during my stay in Denmark (drugs: marijuana, cocaine, heroin, crack cocaine, acids, methamphetamines, mushrooms, ecstasy, etc).
4. I am expected to take an active part in ALL ICYE camps.
5. I will attend my Danish language course provided by ICYE Denmark. I will show interest in learning the language of my host country, Danish.
6. If I receive visitors during my stay in Denmark, I will not schedule my visitor's arrival to conflict with any planned programs of ICYE, nor will the visitor's stay influence my obligations to my project or host family.
7. I will leave Denmark at the end of the exchange year unless I can obtain another resident permit on my own.
8. I am aware that if my private situation changes during my stay in Denmark (i.e. marriage, pregnancy etc.) I cannot continue within the programme of ICYE Denmark. In case of pregnancy, I should contact ICYE Denmark as quickly as possible to obtain some guidance in this matter.
9. I confirm that I have been informed of the fact that my medical insurance and my liability insurance will expire when my exchange year comes to an end. From that time ICYE Denmark has no further obligations towards me.

10. I confirm that I have read and understood the “Danish National Profile” and the document “7 Things volunteers need to know before choosing Denmark”.
11. I will respect the Danish way of life and culture during my stay in Denmark.
12. I will remember that I am a volunteer and an ambassador of my country.

PROJECT AND HOST FAMILY

13. I will respect and follow the rules of my workplace. I will remember that I will be considered a member of staff at the project and must follow moral and ethical rules when working with children and youth. For example, I will not date a student even if we are the same age.
14. Agreements made between me, the project, and host family must be kept.
15. I will inform ICYE Denmark of any problems between myself and the project or the host family in order to guarantee support and I understand that ICYE Denmark’s mediation process will be followed in order to find a successful resolution.
16. I understand that any changes in host placement or host family will not be made during the first six months except in cases where the volunteer’s well-being is threatened.
17. When changing host situations, ICYE Denmark will work with me, the volunteer, to find a suitable new placement.
18. I must be prepared to accept the new host situation found by ICYE Denmark - realising that my placement may be in an isolated or rural area.

TRAVEL

19. I understand that ICYE is neither a tourist nor a travel agency. ICYE Denmark mainly allows independent travel in the last month (2 weeks for the 6-month program) of the exchange year. I cannot begin this travel before the official end of the project. It is possible to take smaller trips during my volunteer year, but this must be approved by project, host family, and ICYE Denmark.
20. If I visit another country, I will have to fill out the necessary form and send it to ICYE Denmark at least 14 days prior to leaving. The project and host family will also have to approve my journey before I leave.

POCKET MONEY

21. I am aware that the pocket money I will receive every month is to cover small personal expenses, and the amount of pocket money I will receive is an amount determined by the ICYE Federation. Pocket money will be transferred to volunteers every month before the 1st.
22. If I choose to return to my home country before the end of the exchange year, I understand that I will not receive any pocket money for the remaining period of the original programme duration and will not be permitted any independent travel. In addition, I am required to fill out the necessary form and send it to ICYE

Denmark at least 14 days prior to departure.

TERMINATION BY ICYE DENMARK

23. I understand this contract may be terminated by ICYE Denmark if I fail to adhere to the rules and guidelines outlined or for any act deemed to be a failure to fulfil this contract to the standards that are required. No refunds shall be given for dismissal due to any of the above reasons.

I have read and understood the above rules and agree to obey them.

Name _____ **Country** _____
Signature _____ **Date** _____

Please return this contract to the ICYE Denmark office before travelling to Denmark.

Image Sources

Page 5. Map of Denmark, Wikimedia Commons. "Europe location DEN.png". User: David Liuzzo. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0f/Europe_location_DEN.png.

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