



# Welcome to Denmark!

*As an exchange student, you are about to discover the fascinating and beautiful country of Denmark. The nation encompasses such varieties of climates, nature, and ethnic groups; your exchange experience will look different from one day to another. You have a wonderful time ahead of you.*

*Regardless of where your host family lives, you will have the opportunity to discover the country's interesting history both in class and through your own explorations. You will gain a true understanding of what it means to be Danish through your relationships with your host family and new friends, found at school and in the community. Prepare for an exchange experience filled with emotions, events, friendships, and high school life. Welcome to Denmark!*

## **Expectations meet reality**

### **– get to know your host country!**

Many of your opinions about Denmark and Danes may be based on stereotypes or preconceptions. Soon you will be experiencing the reality behind those ideas, and it may be vastly different from what you were expecting. The key to success is to keep an open mind and begin preparing for your exchange experience now while you are awaiting placement and departure.

**1. Hygge.** Hygge is an essential element of the Danish culture. The word is difficult to translate, but those seeking to grasp its meaning will realise that it is closely associated with having a good time together with friends or family. Danes are often considered to be the world's happiest people, and hygge seems to be a part of the reason.

**2. Humour.** Humour is another essential element in Denmark. To many Danes, humour and irony are closely linked. Understanding this irony is an important part of understanding the Danish mentality. You might sometimes find that it is easy to misunderstand Danes during a conversation due to the excessive use of irony. In those situations, you should not be afraid to ask.

**3. Socialising and connecting.** Coming to Denmark can be an emotional roller coaster. In Denmark, you might have to put an extra level to your socialising efforts. Danish teenagers can be quite withdrawn and do not talk to people they do not know. When attending your Danish high school, you are doing the right thing in showing initiatives and starting talking to your fellow classmates. Even though they can appear quite reserved at a beginning, Danes make great friends as soon as you get to know them.

## **School**

In Denmark, students are encouraged to combine academic achievements with a variety of activities and sports. The most common advice from our previous exchange students might be to get involved in school activities as soon as you arrive. Danish schools, however, do not always offer a wide range of after-school activities. In this case, you can join clubs around town.

## **School life in Denmark**

The school system in Denmark places a lot of responsibility in the hands of the students, and as such exchange students in Denmark will have a lot of freedom and independence while having a relaxed relationship with teachers. You will be able to choose the area of study you would like to take; this can be anything from science, media, economics or language for instance. The subjects you choose must be studied along with courses that are required in the Danish school system such as Math, English, and Danish.

Typically the school day begins no earlier than 8 p.m. and finishes no later than 4 p.m. There are no requirements for school uniforms in Denmark, with students wearing whatever they feel comfortable in.



### **Free time activities**

Danes love sports. About three out of four children and half of the adult population is engaged in sports activities during their leisure time. Denmark has the highest number of sports facilities per capita amongst the European countries. This meaning there are plenty of awesome opportunities for you to engage in sports activities in your spare time.

Besides immersing in different sports and activities, Danish teenagers often spend time at cafés after school, catching up over a tea or coffee. Sometimes they do their homework or watch movies together.

### **Staying with a Danish host family**

As a member of a host family, you will experience what it means to live like a Dane. Whether you are catching up with your host parents about your school week over Sunday dinner or watching series with your host siblings, you will enjoy a daily life filled with laughter and love.

Every family has their own unwritten rules for daily routines. We ask prospective host families about these routines before your arrival so that they understand that it is crucial for them to highlight and go through them with you. It is your responsibility to adapt to the family's lifestyle and follow the rules of your host family – just like you do at home. You will be expected to keep your room tidy, as well as pick up after yourself around the house. Your host family's lifestyle may be very different from what you are used to in your home country, and you have a lot to win on being open-minded, join their activities, and try new things.

It is always a good idea to let your host parents in on your plans. If you know you will be going to the movies on Friday, tell them so they too can plan their time. If you would like to have a friend coming over, you should ask first. At the beginning of your exchange, there might arise confusions and misunderstandings between you and your family. This is totally normal. The more you communicate and get to know each other, the more frictionless your life together will be. Danish families are very

loving, and many of our families have been hosting students several times before. They will soon see you as a part of their family.

As a member of the family, spending money is intended to cover personal needs such as toiletries and occasional treats like eating out, movies, shopping, and other activities. Host families are not expected to supply you with personal items or extras. If you are going to make long-distance calls, we recommend you to connect to Wi-Fi and call through apps such as FaceTime or WhatsApp.

Your host family will take care of your meals while you are home, but feel free to take initiatives and prepare food from your home country every now and then. Your host family are as curious about your culture, as you are on theirs.

### **Language**

Spending your high school exchange in Denmark is obviously a great way to become fluent in Danish. You have probably already begun to study a bit of Danish, and we highly recommend you to keep studying before your exchange starts. This for you to be able to understand the basics and to adapt to the society as quickly as possible.

You should always try to speak Danish during your time in Denmark. You may be uncomfortable with your skills in the beginning, but you will quickly notice how you become more and more fluent for each day. Your language abilities will improve through your mistakes, and people may correct them in a positive way. Everyone will appreciate your willingness and desire to improve. Before you know it, you will be a fluent Danish speaker!

