DENMARK FOR KIDS
Denmark in brief

- Population: 5,445,000
- Area: 43,098 square kilometres
- Population density: 126.4 pr. square kilometre
- Geographic region: Scandinavia
- Neighbouring countries: Germany, Norway, Sweden
- Gross domestic product: USD 280 billion
  (DKK 1.642 billion)
- GDP pr. inhabitant: USD 45,000
- Capital: Copenhagen 1.1 million inhabitants
  other major cities: Århus 228,000, Odense 158,000, Aalborg 122,000
- Form of state: monarchy
- Government: coalition of the Liberals and the Conservatives, headed by the Liberals
- Head of state: Queen Margrethe II
  (since 14 January 1972)
- Head of government: Anders Fogh Rasmussen
  (since 27 November 2001)
- Ethnic distribution: 91.2% Danes. Immigrants and their descendants constitute about 8.8 per cent of the population.
- Life expectancy: women 80.4 years, men 75.9
- Language: Danish
- Religion: 90% Protestant
- Currency: Danish Kroner, DKK. 1 Krone = 100 Øre (4.80 DKK = 1 USD, 2008)
- Member of: UN, OECD, EU, Nato, Schengen, OSCE, IMF, WTO and others
On top of Europe

Denmark is situated in the part of northern Europe called Scandinavia.

Try looking at a map, then you can see that Denmark is a tiny point on top of Germany, just south of the two other Scandinavian countries, Norway and Sweden, with whom we’re closely related. If we don’t talk too fast, we can understand each other’s languages.

The largest part of Denmark is the one connected to Germany, and which is called Jutland. The rest of the country is islands. There are roughly 400 islands, and 100 are inhabited.

There are bridges between Jutland and the biggest islands, but you have to sail to the small islands. A bridge to Sweden has just been built, so now you can get to Sweden by train in just half an hour.

The Danes are so proud of their bridges. Denmark is only about 300 kilometres long in each direction (that is, north/south and east/west) and around five million people live here, so we’re pretty close together.

But that’s no problem, because we don’t have mountains or deserts or other areas where you can’t live. Actually, people can live all over the country, and they do.
Greenland
(Kalaallit Nunaat)

Form of government
Home rule in national alliance with Denmark

Area
2.17 million square kilometres, 410,449 square kilometres ice-free

Population
56,648 inhabitants

Capital
Nuuk (Godthåb), 15,047 inhabitants

Currency
Danish Kroner (DKK)

This gigantic, incredibly beautiful island has been connected to the Kingdom of Denmark since the 1300s. The people of Greenland, who are descendents of inuit, migrated from northern Canada thousands of years ago.

There are only about 56,000 people all told, because only the coastal areas are habitable, and the northern regions are really rough.

The ice cap covers most of the island, but especially along the west coast of Greenland the climate is relatively mild, so 2/3 of the population lives there. But even there the temperature rarely rises above ten degrees in the summer. Most people live in small towns, but there are also isolated hunting communities scattered over the island. The capital is called Nuuk, and it also lies on the south-west coast. In the southernmost part of the country there are small sheep farms.

Since 1979, Greenland has had home rule with local responsibility for social, political, financial and cultural issues. This means that the government of Greenland decides over these matters.

In other matters (like foreign policy), decisions are made by the government of Denmark. Greenland has two seats in the Danish Parliament.
The Faroe Islands
(Føroyar)

Form of government
Home rule within the Kingdom of Denmark

Area
1,399 square kilometres

Population
48,200 inhabitants

Capital
Tórshavn 19,339 inhabitants

Currency
Danish Kroner (DKK)

Approximately midway between Scotland and Iceland, 18 small and very beautiful, windswept islands lie, with large rounded mountains that look as if they’ve been painted green. That’s the Faroe Islands, “Føroyar”, associated with the Danish kingdom since 1380. The islands consist of old, now inactive, volcanoes, and they are criss-crossed with fjords, deep valleys and narrow sounds. The landscape is overwhelming, but inaccessible in many places. Only about 48,000 people live there, about 1/3 of which live in the capital Tórshavn.

The Faroe Islands have home rule, with their own parliament and government, and they elect two representatives to the Danish Parliament. Greenland has a similar arrangement. The Faroese have their own language - an old Norse language that has survived from the middle ages until now - but people can also speak Danish, which they learn at school.

The Faroes have gradually expanded their selfgovernment within the Kingdom of Denmark. The question of establishing a state of their own, independent from Denmark has for many years been on the political agenda, but so far such a decision has not been taken, among other things because the Faroese authorities receive subsidies from the Danish State.
Parliament and Government

The political system of Denmark is built on democratic principles. That means that the population elects the politicians who are going to decide how Denmark should be run. The Danish Parliament has 179 members, of which two are from Greenland and two from the Faroe Islands.

A general election must be held at least every four years, but the prime ministers can call an election any time within the four years.

In Denmark you have to be at least 18 to vote and to run for a seat in the parliament.

The Danish government
Denmark has a government led by prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen from the Liberals. When the result of a general election becomes clear, the newly elected government goes to Amalienborg Castle and meets with the queen. The government consists of a prime minister - who’s the head of the party that won the election - and other ministers with their own specific areas. There’s a minister of foreign affairs, a minister of education, a minister of food, a minister of the church etc.

The government pursues Denmark’s political position, but because majority governments are rare in Denmark, the government always has to co-operate with other parties in the Parliament to pass their bills.

Prime minister Fogh Rasmussen’s party, the Liberals, have made a government with the Conservative People’s Party. A majority in parliament is ensured by collaborating with the Danish People’s Party, among others.
National symbols

The flag
The most important national symbol in Denmark is, of course, our flag. As in many other countries our flag has its own name. It is called, “Dannebrog”. It is one of the oldest flags in the world, maybe even the oldest. According to legend, the Danish flag fell from the sky during a battle in the year 1219 between the Danes and the Estonians, on the other side of the Baltic. As the flag descended a loud voice proclaimed that the Danes would be victorious if they rallied around the new flag. So, they did.

The Danes won the battle, and we have kept the flag ever since.

The white in the flag symbolizes the Christian cross. The red colour was used even earlier on Viking flags. They flew red flags when they went into battle. However, instead of a cross they had sewn Odin’s ravens onto the red backdrop.

The national anthem
All independent countries usually have a national anthem. But, in Denmark we have two. This has caused quite a lot of confusion. It frequently happens that the “wrong one” is played when Danes participate in international sports events.

The “real” national anthem is called “Der er et yndigt land”. It was written in 1844 and this is the one the Danes regard as their official anthem. This is the one that should be played at sporting events. The lyrics speak to the beauty of the Danish landscape and the mild disposition of the Danes.

You can listen to it here: http://www.um.dk/um_files/Denmark/music/DerErEtYndigtLand.mp3

The “other” national anthem is called “Kong Christian stod ved højen mast”. It is used at more formal occasions, often involving the royal family. The lyrics honour the feats of old war heroes.

You can listen to it here: http://www.um.dk/um_files/Denmark/music/KingChristian.mp3

The national bird
Denmark also has a national bird. In fact, the bird was democratically elected. Until 1984 the lark was considered the national bird. Some experts had decided this. However, the TV channel DR arranged a vote amongst its viewers. Thousands of viewers cast their votes and it turned out the swan won a resounding victory. The people had spoken.
Traditions

As you’re probably aware, Denmark is a very old country. So, many of our traditions are also very old.

“Fastelavn”
In the early spring we celebrate “Fastelavn”, the Danish version of carnival. In the old days Fastelavn lasted for three days. You partied with plenty of good food and drink before fasting for 40 days during lent, which ended with the Christian Easter celebration.

All children wear a costume for Fastelavn. You decide what you want to dress up as. You can come as a robot, a ballerina, a ghost, or a chimney sweep. There are no rules, except to use your imagination and have fun.

We also play a game called “Slå Katten af tønden” (Kick the Kitty Cat). This is how the game is played: you take a wooden barrel and fill it with candy and little toys, hoist it up so it’s hanging suspended in the air. Now, all the children line up and take turns hitting the barrel with a wooden club. The point of the game is to smash the barrel so all the goodies fall out. Everybody who participates gets a share of the loot, but there are two winners in the game: the Cat Queen, the person who breaks the barrel; and the Cat King, the person who knocks down the last remaining part of the barrel.

The reason the game has such an odd name is that in the old days there used to be a live cat inside the barrel. Obviously, this was a very cruel game and nobody does that anymore, but part of the tradition has survived.

We play the game at school, or sometimes somebody in your neighbourhood will arrange it, or you might play it in one of the clubs or organizations that many Danes belong to.

Fastelavnsboller (sweet bun) is a special kind of bun you eat during Fastelavn. It’s also customary that the children are given a “fastelavnsris”, a wicker made of birch branches with small paper decorations and pieces of candy tied to it.

It is also part of the tradition that the children go door to door in their costumes to ask for candy or small change.

When somebody opens the door, we sing a little song that goes something like this:
This part of the tradition is very similar to what American kids do at Halloween when they go trick or treating. In fact, nowadays many Danish kids like to celebrate Halloween in the fall. That way you can re-use your costume. However, the candy payoff is still better during Fastelavn.

**Easter**
We celebrate Easter like other Christians. It’s a holiday and we get off from school. People like to get together with friends and family to enjoy an Easter lunch. One of the Easter customs is to send an anonymous letter to somebody you know. The letter is a riddle. Instead of writing your name you sign it with as many dots as there are letters in your name, and you challenge the recipient of the letter to guess who the sender is:

```
“Yummy, yummy, yummy
Sweet buns in my tummy
Trick or treat
Gi’me something sweet to eat”
```

You see, if you manage to guess who the sender is, then that person owes you a chocolate Easter egg. On the other hand, should you fail; the sender can collect an egg from you.

During Easter there are eggs everywhere. We like to eat the special chocolate Easter eggs. Sometimes they are large and hollow, filled with smaller eggs. Supposedly it’s the Easter Bunny that sneaks around and hides the children’s eggs behind the bushes or under the furniture. However, I suspect that the parents might have something to do with it. It doesn’t matter; an Easter egg hunt is always good fun.

There are other Easter customs as well. A strange tradition, practiced in a few places, is to decorate a
hardboiled egg. Then everybody takes their egg to a designated hilltop. Each person has to roll his or her egg down the hill. Whoever has the egg that rolls the longest is the winner.

**Other traditions**
We also celebrate **Skt. Hans** on the 23rd of June. This celebration is similar to Christmas because it is also a combination of an old heathen tradition and a Christian tradition. We celebrate John the Baptist, but it also happens to be the longest day of the year, the summer solstice. We gather around bonfires and sing songs. A figure in the shape of a witch is often placed on top of the bonfire.

Skt. Hans marks the beginning of summer, and school is out for the next six weeks.

In October we get a week off from school. It’s not a religious holiday; it’s just a fall break. In the old days they had a different name for this vacation. It was called **“the potato vacation”** because children in the country got out of school in order to help with the potato harvest.
Danish Christmas

When we get close to Christmas we walk in a Lucia procession in schools and kindergartens. The tradition actually comes from Sweden. It’s a celebration of Skt. Lucia and the winter solstice.

In December we have another custom that is very important to Danish kids. It is a Christmas calendar where you can follow the countdown to Christmas Eve. You get to open a little present on each day in December until you reach the 24th. Sometimes the presents are a little bigger on Sundays. All the presents for each day are displayed on the calendar. So, it requires great self-discipline not to cheat and open all of them at once. But to do so is very bad form.

The different Danish TV companies participate in the Christmas countdown with special programming. They broadcast their own “calendar” shows. It’s usually a Christmas story consisting of 24 little episodes with the last one on Christmas Eve. These shows are extremely popular, and even though they are made for kids many adults also like to watch them.

Christmas Eve
Christmas in Denmark is a weird mix, just like in many other countries. Jesus’ birthday is celebrated, but because nobody knows exactly when Jesus was born, the Christian church chose in 354 to celebrate his birthday at midwinter - 25 December - to make it coincide with the Norsemen’s heathen celebration of winter solstice - 21 December. That’s the shortest day of the year and the day when the light returns and the days grow longer. For unknown reasons we celebrate Christmas the evening before, 24 December, that is.

The way a traditional Christmas is celebrated on Christmas Eve follows the same script in most Danish homes. You gather as many close family members as possible. Usually the guests arrive early in the evening. They bring presents that are placed under the Christmas tree.

Christmas dinner
After everybody is seated around the table, the traditional Christmas dinner is served. Maybe you eat a small hors d’oeuvre before the main course, fish for example. However, the main course always consists of either pork roast, duck or goose. In some families you
serve all three of them. We always eat potatoes with the meal; not only boiled potatoes, but also little fancy candied potatoes. Pickled red cabbage and plenty of brown gravy are also customary.

The Danish Christmas dinner is very traditional, and so is the dessert. It is called Ris a la mande; it basically consists of a rice porridge mixed with whipped cream, vanilla, chopped almonds and sugar. It actually tastes pretty good, but it’s rather heavy after you have stuffed yourself with roast and duck. But there is no way around it, you have to eat up. You see, the grown-ups have hidden a whole almond somewhere in the porridge and whoever finds it wins a prize.

A meal like this can go on for several hours and often the children tend to get a little impatient. They are anxious to get to the main event: all the presents waiting under the tree. However, they know that before that happens everybody has to leave the table and gather around the Christmas tree where you sing some Christmas carols, and then, finally, you can get to the presents.
Food habits

Children in Denmark by and large eat very well. Like many other places in the world, we do eat our share of junk-food, sweets and candy, and occasionally we drink too many sodas. However, the food is generally healthy and nutritious. Typical Danish meals are a combination of traditional Danish dishes and new dishes we have imported from abroad.

A typical meal plan may look like this:

**Breakfast:**
- Yoghurt
- Cereal
- Bread with jam or cheese
- A slice of fruit
- Tea, milk or juice

**Lunch:**
When we are in school we bring packed lunches. Usually there is some type of sandwich in the lunchbox. Sometimes it’s just two pieces of rye bread with a slice of salami (or other lunch meat) in between them. This type of sandwich is called a “klapsammen”, which literally means a “fold-up”. It’s very practical, you can make it in a jiffy, and it will survive the transporta-

**Afternoon snack:**
When we come home from school, we often eat some sort of fruit. If you’re lucky, you might talk your parent into giving you a piece of cake or a glass of chocolate milk.

**Dinner:**
This is the most important meal, and it’s almost always a hot meal. We might eat pizza or lasagna. We also eat quite a lot of homemade pasta dishes as the main course. Danish meatballs is a classic dish, so are pork chops and beef patties. These dishes are served with rice or potatoes.

We eat a lot of rice. And lots and lots of potatoes. We boil the potatoes. We almost never get french fries unless we are eating out.
It’s a little strange. We are surrounded by the sea and have plenty of fish. But we don’t eat fish that often, once a week at the most. We do eat a lot of salads, and we tend to eat many vegetables. We don’t normally serve a starter with our dinner. That’s only for festive occasions or if you eat at a fancy restaurant. We often eat a small dessert after the main course. It could be a piece of fruit, a small portion of ice cream, or a bowl of fruit sauce.

Because Danish children often travel to foreign countries with their parents, the Danish taste in food have become more and more international. Don’t be surprised if you’re served Thai food, tortillas, or a Middle Eastern dish. We like it all because Danes love to cook and eat well.

**Famous Danish dishes**
A few Danish food habits are known worldwide. This is true for example of the type of pastry known as “Danish”. Almond sticks, baked apple charlotte and hot dishes like goose or pork roast with apples, prunes, candied potatoes, red cabbage and brown gravy are also among the Danish dishes known in the rest of the world.
The Royal Family

The Danish monarchy is the oldest in the world. In former times the king was the absolute ruler - that meant that he decided pretty much everything. It’s not like that today, but the royal house is still an important national symbol of unity.

Our monarchy is headed by a queen. Margrethe Alexandrine Thorhildur Ingrid, became Queen of Denmark in 1972. Queen Margrethe II was born on 16 April 1940 at Amalienborg Palace as the daughter of King Frederik IX (d. 1972) and Queen Ingrid. The Queen’s motto is “God’s help, the love of The People, Denmark’s strength”.

On 10 June 1967, she married Henri Marie Jean André Count of Laborde de Monpezat, who in connection with the marriage became His Royal Highness Prince Henrik of Denmark. Queen Margrethe II and Prince Henrik has two sons:


The Danish royal house - like so many other European royal houses - has a bit of an international history. For many years it was tradition that the royal houses of Europe ‘exchanged’ princes and princesses, because if you were royal, it was considered appropriate to marry another royal person.

The mother of our present queen Margrethe II, Ingrid, was a Swedish princess. Queen Margrethe’s husband, Prince Henrik, is a French count, and the queen’s two younger sisters got married to a German count and a Greek king.

Today they don’t have to marry other royal persons, but still they often come from abroad. Denmark’s youngest prince, Prince Joachim, was married to a civil girl from Hong Kong, Alexandra Manley. They are now divorced.

On 24 May 2008 Prince Joachim married Miss Marie Agathe Odile Cavallier, from France, who in connection with the marriage became HRH Princess Marie of Denmark, Countess de Monpezat.
Mary wasn’t born into a royal family. Her mom and dad, John and Henrietta Donaldson, lived in Tasmania south of Australia. This is where Mary grew up, went to school, and lived a fairly ordinary life. She had no idea that one day she would marry a prince and end up living in a royal castle on the other side of the globe. But, that’s what happened. Actually Frederik and Mary met in connection with the Olympic Games; you can read more about that later if you are interested. Today the couple lives in Amalienborg Palace in the centre of Copenhagen. They spend their summers at Fredensborg Castle to the north of Copenhagen.


On 21 April 2007 the little sister, Princess Isabella Henrietta Ingrid Margrethe was born.

You can read more about the Crown Prince family on their home page, www.kronprinsparret.dk

From the marriage with Countess Alexandra Prince Joachim has two sons: Prince Nikolai, born on 28 August 1999 Prince Felix, born on 22 July 2002.

Queen Margrethe’s eldest son is called Frederik, and because he’s the crown prince, he’ll inherit the throne.

You can read more about the Royal family on their home page www.kongehuset.dk

**The Crown Prince and the Crown Princess**

The name of the future king of Denmark is Frederik the tenth, his wife’s name is Mary and she will be the next Danish queen.

Today they have the titles of Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark.

From when he was a boy Frederik knew that some day he would be the next Danish king. Frederik was born to become King because he was the first born boy child of Crown Princess Margrethe, who is the present queen of Denmark, Margrethe the Second.

Mary wasn’t born into a royal family. Her mom and dad, John and Henrietta Donaldson, lived in Tasmania south of Australia. This is where Mary grew up, went to school, and lived a fairly ordinary life. She had no idea that one day she would marry a prince and end up living in a royal castle on the other side of the globe. But, that’s what happened. Actually Frederik and Mary met in connection with the Olympic Games; you can read more about that later if you are interested. Today the couple lives in Amalienborg Palace in the centre of Copenhagen. They spend their summers at Fredensborg Castle to the north of Copenhagen.


On 21 April 2007 the little sister, Princess Isabella Henrietta Ingrid Margrethe was born.

You can read more about the Crown Prince family on their home page, www.kronprinsparret.dk
Famous Danes and Danish products

Hans Christian Andersen
The Danish fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen is very well known all over the world. He has written a lot of good fairy tales that most children and adults in the world have read or have had read to them. Hans Christian Andersen was born in 1805 and he got to be 70 years old.

While he lived he managed to write some 190 fairy tales and stories. The best known include 'The Ugly Duckling', 'The Emperor's New Clothes' The Princess and the Pea' and 'The Little Mermaid'. She sits on a rock in Copenhagen's harbour. A sculpture of her, that is.

But Hans Christian Andersen also wrote novels, travel books, poems and plays. You may know the sentence "To travel is to live" – that’s a famous Andersen quotation. His works have been translated into 120 languages.

Tivoli
Lies right in the middle of Copenhagen and is one of the oldest amusement parks in the world. There are all sorts of rides, shooting galleries, game arcades and plenty of restaurants. Tivoli is pretty famous, and almost every tourist in Copenhagen goes there.

Once Walt Disney visited, and he was so happy about Tivoli that he decided he wanted to make one himself. The result was Disneyland, which you might know. But Tivoli is different.

Maersk
The Danish container shipping business Maersk Sealand is one of the biggest shipping enterprises in the world. Their containers bring goods to every corner of the globe. Maersk Sealand is part of the A. P. Møller Group, which apart from the shipping
business also dabbles in the search for and production of oil and gas, ship building, air traffic, industrial manufacturing, retailing and IT services. Director Mærsk McKinney Møller is one of the richest people in Denmark.

**The good stuff**
Some of the goods we’re known for around the world are lego bricks, bacon and dairy products such as Lurpak butter, cheese and milk.

In England they love bacon. In October 1847 the Danes began shipping bacon to England. It was so popular that it marked the beginning of the greatest Danish export success ever.

Lurpak butter was the first exported Danish dairy product. Lurpak is one of the best known brands of butter in the world. It is sold in more than 100 countries.

We are also pretty good at making candy and gum.

Most children in the world has held a piece of lego in his or her hand at some point. Lego has produced the toys since 1932, and over the last 60 years the world-wide sales of lego bricks has exceeded 320 billion units. That would correspond to every human being in the world having 52 lego bricks – because there are six billion people in the world.

We have quite a few inventors in Denmark. Some of them have designed some of the best playgrounds in the world. Others have invented clever devises that help you with your football training.
Famous Danish architects
Maybe you know the big opera house in Sydney, Australia, made from white concrete shells that open towards the harbour like extended sails. It was drawn by the Danish architect Jørn Utzon. The Sydney opera house made Utzon world famous in 1957 and ensured that he received new orders. Shortly afterwards he designed the Melli Bank in Teheran and the Kuwaiti parliament.

Johann Otto von Spreckelsen is another world famous Danish architect. He designed the great triumphal arch 'La Grande Arche' in the very modern neighbourhood La Defense in the French capital, Paris. The arch is 110 metres high and it’s made from concrete, marble and glass – it was inaugurated in 1989.

We also have some outstanding architects and designers of furniture. Some of them make furniture for children.

“Fat Cat” chairs
The small families

Most often Danish families aren’t very big. Most couples only have one or two children. Of course, some have five children and others never have any, but on average every woman gets 1.7 children. Compared with other European countries, roughly the same number of children per woman are born in Denmark and France, whereas Spanish women only have 1.2 children on average.

Elsewhere in the world there are families where adults and children live with their parents and grandparents. But several generations living together under one roof is rare in Denmark.

About 35,500 couples a year get married in Denmark, but many choose just to live together without getting married - especially young people.

Some Danish marriages break up - every year around 13,500 couples get divorced. And even if they’ve had children, many divorced people marry again, and then you have families with ‘my’ children and ‘your’ children and ‘our’ children. One in three Danish children has parents who are divorced.

Within the last 20 years, the number of children with half-brothers and step-sisters and stuff like that have increased. If you’re half-siblings you either have the same mom or the same dad. And step-sibling don’t have the same parents at all, they’ve just become brothers or sisters because their mom or dad has married someone else’s mom or dad.

24% of Danish children aged 0 to 17 have half-brothers or sisters - and that’s more than twice as many as 20 years ago.
Education

Danish children and youngsters spend many years in school. A child who starts nursery school today will on average spend 16-17 years studying before attaining the final exam certificate. That’s a couple of years more than in most other European countries.

Children start kindergarten when they’re three years old, and when they reach five or six they’re introduced to the real school.

Schools are free in Denmark and all children must go to school for nine years. More than half, however, choose to educate themselves further. Of those who continue studying, about half do some kind of vocational education, like hairdresser or car mechanic, while the other half typically choose high school. There are many who want to learn even more, and they go to university. Actually, it’s possible to go to school for 20 years in Denmark, if you include a university education in your strategy.

You don’t have to learn a lot by heart, either, because the teachers think it’s more important to learn to talk to each other and communicate well.

Most Danish schools only have a brief lunch break, so everybody brings packed lunches to school.

Just like in many other countries, you have to learn languages other than Danish. English is the first foreign language pupils are taught. You begin to study English in the 4th grade and continue to at least the 9th grade. In grade 7-9 the schools must also offer classes in German, but it is also possible to give the pupils the choice between German and French.

It is forbidden by law for the teachers to hit pupils. Generally, the atmosphere is very relaxed and informal - for instance, you address your teachers by their first names, and no pupils anywhere wear school uniforms.
Free time and sports

Children in Denmark have quite a lot of free time. They spend about 5 to 6 hours in school and they usually don’t work a whole lot.

A normal schedule for a Danish kid might look something like this:

8:00 am to 1:00 pm: In school

1:00 to 4:00 pm: After school. Usually a place where the kids can play safely with each other, supervised by teachers or pedagogues. This can be at school or some other institution.

4:00 to 6:00 pm: At home. Doing homework, relaxing on the sofa. Early evening dinner.

6:00 pm to 8:00. Out and about. Maybe doing sports, football practice, for example.

After 8:00 pm. Back home. More homework. A snack. Arguing with your parents about when to go to bed.

Danish children like to be active in their free time. This is not to say that Danish kids don’t waste time in front of the tube or take cat naps in the sofa. But, in general, they like to do things.

Computer games are popular. Online games as well; most Danish children have internet access. Danish kids also like to read. Through the free library system it’s easy to get the books you want. It’s also quite common to be a girl or boy scout or to take music lessons.

A lot of children in Denmark do sports. 89% of the 7-15 year-olds have done some kind of sport regularly within the last couple of years. The most popular sports among Danish children are: football, swimming, gymnastics, handball, badminton and roller-skating.

The girls’ favorite sport is gymnastics, and, in contrast to boys, girls also like horseback riding. The same number of girls and boys do swimming, and the same is true of roller-skating.

72% of children aged 7 to 15 are members of a sports club. In Denmark the tradition is to organize sports in clubs and associations, and almost every town has an association open to both children and adults.
A kid’s vacation in Denmark

Denmark is a brilliant country to vacation in. Anyway, that’s how we, the Danes, look at it. Whatever you fancy doing, it’s possible to do it here, except for mountain climbing and downhill skiing, of course. The climate is rather pleasant. The summers are not too hot and the winters rarely get really cold.

The coastline
When the Danes go on vacation, they often spend it in Denmark. We immediately gravitate towards the beaches and the sea, almost as if compelled by a law of nature. The Danish coastline is 73,000 kilometres long, and we have excellent beaches everywhere in the country. The water is clean; even in the centre of Copenhagen you can go for a swim.

Thousands of people love to sail in Denmark. During the summer people come to visit in their sailboats from our neighbouring countries. In fact, people come from all over Europe. The many small islands, bays, and fjords make it a fascinating experience to sail in Danish waters.

It’s not only modern luxury yachts you see on the water. You can still spot many old fashioned wooden sailboats.

If you’re lucky you might come across a Viking ship. But, don’t be alarmed, it’s not a real Viking ship of course; it’s just a model of one. The crew members might be the descendants of the Vikings, but I can assure you they are quite harmless.

If you would prefer to take a leisurely canoe trip on one of the many lakes or streams, be my guest! You can find lots of places where it’s possible to rent canoes or rowboats.

Getting around
You can travel around the country by train, bus, or drive your car. However, if you want to vacation Danish style, then you have to ride your bike. In Denmark there are thousands of special bike paths where you can safely ride your bike. The island in the Baltic Sea, Bornholm, is just one example.

There are several places where your family can rent a wagon pulled by horses. It’s almost like a camper
except you have exchanged the car with a couple of horses. It’s a lot more fun than riding in your car, and you can use carrots instead of gas.

**Where to stay**

It’s easy to find accommodations. There are plenty of hotels, inns, bed-and-breakfast places, and camping grounds if you’re looking for a place to spend the night. We also have quite a few hostels. The standard is high; they are almost like mini hotels. And, by the way, hostels are an excellent place to meet other tourist kids.

**Old stuff isn’t boring**

At some point your parents will probably try to convince you to visit a museum. Don’t sulk. Give it a chance! Denmark is a very old country, and we’re very keen on taking good care of our heirlooms. So, if you go to one of the museums, I can promise you an interesting experience.

In some parts of the country we have preserved entire villages from the old days. All the buildings are the original ones. They were taken apart, brick by brick, moved from where they once stood, and then carefully reassembled. This is an excellent opportunity to get a vivid idea of what life was like back then. You can experience Denmark of the past in places such as “Den Gamle By” in Århus or “Frilandsmuseet” north of Copenhagen.

If you are curious about life in the very, very old days: the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, or the time of the Vikings, then you should visit “Forsøgscenter Lejre” close to Roskilde. Here you get a taste of what life was like then; literally, because you smell it, feel it, and eat the food.

**Go for a ride**

There are also many amusement parks in different parts of the country. The most famous ones are Ti-voli, Dyrehavsbakken just north of Copenhagen, and Legoland. But these are not the only ones; there are lots of other places where you can play and have fun for hours on end.

Grownups sometimes get a little tired after a day of zoos, museums, and amusement parks. If that’s the case, just take them to the beach to relax. That never fails to cheer them up.
If you want to learn more..

Hopefully you have learned a lot about Denmark from this booklet. But there is so much more interesting stuff to know, if you go online.

About Denmark in general through fun videos and more..
www.kids.denmark.dk

Make your own film sequence about Denmark
www.considerdenmark.dk

Photos from Denmark
http://billeder.visitdenmark.com/

About what it’s like to be a tourist in Denmark
www.visitdenmark.dk
(http://www.visitdenmark.dk/uk/en-gb/menu/turist/turistforside.htm)

It’s all free to use.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Asiatisk Plads 2
DK-1448 København K,
Denmark
Phone: +45 33 92 00 00
Fax: +45 32 54 05 33
E-mail: um@um.dk

Website: www.um.dk


Credits:

Text editor: Lars Mathiasen, swift & gelinde

Photos: Alletiders Kogebog, Klaus Bentzen, Colourbox, Fritz Hansen A/S, Kam & Co., Kristian Krogh, John Sommer, Jon Fossa, Marianne Rasmussen, Michael Damsgaard, Niclas Jessen, RoomMate, Steen Brogaard, Steen Evald, VisitCopenhagen, VisitDenmark

Published September 2008.