WORK AND LIFE

IN DENMARK

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WORK IN DENMARK

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Work & Family Time
An improved work-life balance was the biggest change
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Danes speak their mind
How I came to appreciate the Danish workplace culture
Page 4
When in Denmark,
with its 8,500 km of coastline, you are never more than 52 km from the seaside.

A job in Denmark?

Thousands of well-educated foreigners come to Denmark every year to work and live. Many are attracted by the opportunity to combine professional challenges, comfortable living conditions and family-friendly working hours.

To meet the future need for well-qualified labour, Denmark needs to attract more talented people from abroad. That’s why many Danish private and public organisations are keen to recruit highly-skilled foreign workers and make great efforts to ensure that their international employees settle well into their new life in Denmark.

Workindenmark is the Danish Ministry of Employment’s unit for international recruitment. We facilitate contact between Danish companies and international candidates and communicate our knowledge and experience to all interested parties.

This newspaper is for anyone who’s considering relocating to Denmark to apply and develop their professional expertise. We hope that it provides the information you need to find out whether Denmark is the place for you.

You can read more about job opportunities, relocation in Denmark, and Danish culture and society at workindenmark.dk

Although Denmark is a small country, direct flights connect us with many major international airports.
Denmark for more than you plan on staying in idea to learn Danish if. Most Danes speak in most cases, you’ll only need to visit to contact are represented at ICS. So it’s always a good idea to contact your municipality office for your options to learn Danish. A difficult language The Danish language is reputed to be difficult – particularly when it comes to pronunciation. And although you may need only a few months of teaching to be able to understand a fair amount of Danish, most people find that it takes at least a year – and sometimes even two or three – to become really proficient in Danish.

Dealing with the paperwork

It’s a good idea to take care of formalities as soon as possible when you arrive. And don’t worry, help is at hand if you need it.

Where would you like to live?

In most parts of Denmark, you can choose between different kinds of accommodation.

Learn Danish

Most Danes speak English, but it’s a good idea to learn Danish if you plan on staying in Denmark for more than six months.

In many Danish companies, you’ll get along fine without speaking Danish. However, not only settling in to a workplace, but also to Danish society is far easier if you make the effort to learn Danish. And if you bring your family, the advice is clear: take a Danish course. Many language schools offer a special Danish language programme for non-Danish residents referred to as Danish Language Education. The education consists of 6-6 modules. If you have been granted a residence permit on basis of employment/study or an EU registration certificate, a module of the education costs 2,000 kr. You should also pay a deposit to start the education at some schools.

If you already possess an elementary level of Danish speaking and comprehension proficiency, you have a possibility to learn Danish for free in Preparatory Education for Adults (FVU). The language requirements to learn Danish in FVU vary from school to school. Some language schools offer a preparatory course that brings you to the level needed for FVU, but the preparatory course is not free of charge.

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Where would you like to live?

In most parts of Denmark, you can choose between different kinds of accommodation. House or flat? City centre or countryside? In many parts of Denmark, you can find an accommodation of your choice – and sometimes even two or three – to become really proficient in Danish.

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Learn Danish Online for free – visit onlinedansk.ventures.dk

Read more workindenmark.dk lifeindenmark.dk dedanskesprogcentre.dk

Where would you like to live?

In most parts of Denmark, you can choose between different kinds of accommodation.

House or flat? City centre or countryside? In a small country like Denmark, you’re always just a car ride away from a city regardless of where you choose to live. Copenhagen is never more than seven-hour drive away, no matter where you are in the country – and beautiful woodlands and beaches are only a short journey away, too.

Most companies provide accommodation for their international employees on arrival. But this might be temporary or possibly not quite to your liking. So most international employees spend time finding more permanent accommodation that suits their needs. The Workindenmark centres can refer you to relocation agents or relevant estate agents.

How hard was it to learn Danish?

I spent a lot of time and effort learning the language in the beginning. It is a difficult language, but that made a big difference and has helped me get into the job market more quickly.

How was your biggest challenge?

Finding a flat to live in. It was very expensive. I subleased a place for half a year and have lived in most parts of the city. That is why I settled on a small budget has been difficult. The challenge?

What has been your biggest challenge?

Finding a place to live on a relatively small budget has been difficult. The flats in Copenhagen are very expensive. I subleased a place for half a year and have lived in most parts of the city. That is why I settled on a small budget has been difficult. The challenge?

What are your future plans?

I’ve simply lost my heart to the Danish lifestyle and work culture and my plans are to stay here. It just fits me.
Danes speak their mind

Employees in Denmark make great demands on their bosses and don’t think twice about speaking their minds. This is a major benefit according to lawyer Francis Slingsby, who moved from the UK to Denmark to be a manager at the Danish company DONG Energy Wind Power.

“Danes speak their minds openly – to their bosses too, whereas we Brits would be less direct. I get on fine with the Danish manner, which is constructive and effective. When holding meetings at work, we get to the point a lot quicker,” says Francis Slingsby.

He and his Swedish wife Martina lived and worked in London until the couple moved to the Danish capital Copenhagen in the summer of 2013. Francis now manages a team of 14 employees at the Asset Performance and Partnerships department and has colleagues both in Denmark and the UK. The department is in charge of commercial management and partner relations when DONG Energy Wind Power is constructing and operating offshore wind farms.

Most of the employees in the department are Danes, and Francis has quickly come to appreciate the culture at Danish workplaces and the new demands it makes on him as a manager:

- The hierarchy in a Danish workplace is flatter than I am used to. In my previous management positions, the manager’s word was law. Here everyone gives their opinion if they think they have something to contribute. I find that rather refreshing, and it helps the team to move forward as one.
- Danes demand professional development

Francis Slingsby finds that Danish employees take their own professional development very seriously. This means that they request and expect thorough and regular feedback from their manager.

“As a manager, I have to be aware of how each individual employee’s career is developing and be ready to give feedback or risk my employees getting frustrated and stagnating. And I’m very impressed to see how much and how quickly they are making progress.”

All the dialogue and employee involvement in Danish workplaces mean there are lots of meetings. Francis has become skilled at selecting which meetings he should attend – otherwise they would fill his entire calendar.

He finds the social conventions at work very informal and social. He eats lunch with his employees and the team knows a little about what is happening in each other’s lives, also outside the office. But it took him a while to get used to the Danish sense of humour.

“Danish humour cuts close to the bone and Brits can feel it is rather rude. But it’s always said with a twinkle in the eye and a smile so you realise it’s just for fun.”

His wife got a job and a network

He and his wife, Martina Slingsby, are very happy to be living in Copenhagen. Though the city is only a tenth the size of London, they think it has almost as much to offer. The city is only a tenth the size of London, they think it has almost as much to offer. And you can cross the city in 15 minutes by bike.

They feel they have settled down in Denmark in record time and attribute this partly to the help Martina received with finding a job and networking.

As Francis explains, after moving to Copenhagen, Martina took advantage of several Workindenmark offers for international jobseekers. One was a seminar that gave her advice on job hunting in Denmark. Today she has a dream job as a post doc at the University of Copenhagen. Through the seminar, she also met a number of the spouses, who are now among the couple’s circle of friends.

“I’m very impressed by Workindenmark. The help they gave my wife with finding a job and in moving us to a new place is on our feet here in Denmark. We got married when we moved here so this is the first chapter of our life together and we are off to a flying start.”

Read his wife’s story on page 7.

Teamwork and consensus

To be successful in a Danish company, you need to be able to act and think independently. At the same time, you need fairly advanced collaborative and communicative skills so you can work with colleagues and superiors and take part in decision-making processes.

In many Danish companies, work is project-based and the professional culture is consensus-driven, which means it’s normal for employees to discuss the projects they are working on. But Danish workplaces are also characterised by another culture which international employees soon discover: the meeting culture.

There are far more meetings in a Danish workplace than most workers from abroad are used to. But these meetings have a purpose: they are a professional forum where employees have the opportunity to share their opinions and offer their assessments of the issues discussed – and everyone is expected to take an active part. Another trait common to Danish workplaces is the fairly invisible hierarchy. Communication between managers and employees is very relaxed and two-way. Moreover, employees have a great degree of freedom to plan their own work. A Danish boss will not control every decision you make, but instead will trust that you have the expertise to know the right thing to do. With such freedom and trust, however, comes a great amount of personal responsibility.
Do’s and don’ts at work

There are unwritten rules in any workplace – and Danish workplaces are no exception. Follow the five dos and don’ts, and you’re sure to get off to a good start in your new job.

Dos

- Be proactive. Don’t wait for an invitation. The Danes tend to be reserved and might not automatically ask you out for a drink after work.
- Participate. Share your opinions at the many meetings you attend. Welcome to Consensus Culture Country where everyone expects to be heard.
- Work independently. Avoid asking permission for everything. Trust that you were hired because you have the right qualifications for the job. Admit to mistakes.
- Motivate your staff. If you’re a manager provide challenges and professional development. Bureaucratic titles are not so important to Danish employees.
- Be informal. Practice straight talking. Don’t soften what you want to say in polite phrases and defer. Don’t be late. Danes are generally very punctual.

Don’ts

- Don’t eat lunch alone. This is not considered friendly. Join your colleagues where they usually go for lunch.
- Don’t question religious beliefs or political convictions. Such issues are considered private and should only be discussed if your colleagues volunteer them.
- Avoid working very late. Particularly if you’re a manager or have a family. Your Danish colleagues might think you are letting your children down.
- Don’t be late. Danes are generally very punctual.
- Never give orders. Always explain why you have asked someone to do something. Danes want to know the reasoning behind the decisions made.

The Danish ‘flexicurity model’

The Danish labour market is internationally known for its ‘flexicurity model’. A mix of the terms ‘flexibility’ and ‘security’, this concept refers to a welfare state model that combines a flexible labour market with social security for all workers.

Most labour market issues are settled by employers and employees rather than by law. Employees choose a union representative who undertakes local negotiations on wages and other work conditions with the employer. In many work places, professional organisations play an active role and approximately six out of ten employees are members of a trade union.

Unemployment insurance

Unemployment insurance is voluntary. This means you are not automatically insured against unemployment. The Danish unemployment insurance is administered by unemployment insurance funds (a-kasse) as an insured member, you may receive unemployment benefits from the first day of unemployment if you have been a member of the insurance fund for at least 12 months and your income the past three years has been at least 233,376 kr. (2019-ratel). Please observe that you must have lived in Denmark, another EU/EEA member state or Switzerland 5 out of 12 years in 2019, 6 years in 2020 and 7 in 2021.

Everyone works less

In Denmark, working hours per year are relatively low law compared with countries such as Germany, Spain, USA, Hungary, India and China. Danes also have many holidays, particularly compared with countries outside Europe.

Pension

All Danish citizens receive a state pension from the age of 65 – 68 depending on when they were born. As a supplement, most Danes contribute a monthly sum towards a private pension. Many employees’ contracts state that in addition to a salary, the employer must pay an amount every month to a private pension scheme, which is paid out on retirement. As a rule, employees are also required to pay a fixed amount to the scheme every month.

Taking time off

Danish workplaces are characterised by a good work-life balance. Many employees have flexible working hours and some even have a home office, allowing them to work from home certain days a week.

Danish office hours are usually between 8:30am and 4:30pm, and overtime is not as common as in many other countries. All employees have the right to five weeks’ paid holiday a year – many even have six weeks. As a new employee, you have the right to five weeks of during your first year of employment, but you won’t have earned the right to paid holiday until your second year.

Did you know that…?
The employment rate for Danish women is one of the highest in Europe.
**Public and private healthcare**

In Denmark, public medical help and hospitalisation are free of charge, but there’s a partial charge for dental care.

**Did you know that...?**

Denmark has one of the lowest crime rates in the world.

**International schools in Denmark**

- More than 20 independent basic schools are currently authorised to teach in other languages than Danish.
- The primary teaching language in Danish international schools is English – except at Prins Henrik’s Skole (French) and Sankt Petri Skole (German). Deutsches Gymnasium für Nordschleswig (German).
- It costs an average of DKK 27,000 a year to attend a private school in Denmark.
- For a full list of Danish international schools, please go to eng.uvm.dk

**Childcare and schooling**

All families in Denmark are offered public childcare and can choose between free state schools or private schools.

- When children turn six, they start school in Denmark. Many schools have high-quality sports and leisure facilities.
- All children in Denmark are guaranteed a place in a childcare institution, and almost all Danish families use child daycare as it’s normal for both parents to work once the child has turned one year old.

Childcare options consist of:
- day nurseries and local childcare (in private homes) for children 0-3 years old
- kindergartens (barnehave) for children 3-6 years old
- pre/after-school centres for children 6-10 years old.

Most childcare facilities are open Monday-Thursday 6:30 am to 5 pm, and Fridays until 4 pm.

Childcare is financed partly by the parents and partly by the municipality. Prices differ somewhat depending on the municipality and the type of childcare. The prices for children of 0-3 years old are up to DKK 3,900 per month including meals. Kindergartens often cost less.

**Preschool facilities for all children**

Most childcare services are municipal, but in a few of the many privately owned facilities, the spoken language is English. To register, please contact the respective municipality as soon as possible. A waiting list is not unusual, but most guarantee a place for children from the age of one.

Almost all Danish families send their children to a ‘barnehave’. They have professionally trained staff, but children don’t receive preschool teaching. Instead, these facilities stimulate children’s social, linguistic and democratic skills, primarily through play, mixing boys and girls, and welcoming children from all religious and social backgrounds.

**Primary education**

When children turn six, they start school in Denmark – and ten years of primary and lower secondary schooling is obligatory. Most Danish children attend state schools, which are free of charge, while others go to private schools where the parents pay tuition fees.

Following primary education, children have free access to a number of public secondary education programmes that prepare them for higher education. Danish universities and other higher education institutions are also public and free of charge.

**International schools**

Many of the families who come to Denmark for professional reasons prefer to send their children to an international school, most of which are situated in or around the large cities. Some of the international schools have waiting lists, but the Danish government is prioritising the creation of more places at Danish international schools and the Danish Parliament in April 2016 passed a new legislation on municipal international basic schools, which gives the municipalities the opportunity to set up international basic schools from the school year 2016/17.
In Denmark and together again

They didn’t plan it and never imagined it, but after coming to Denmark from Portugal, Cristina Ferreira and Pedro Leitão found themselves in a very familiar situation.

"It all started in 2013, when I took a job with Dania, an iron foundry, and moved from Portugal to the small town of Aars," explains Cristina, a materials engineer and specialist in metallurgy. The couple were excited to start a new adventure. After several years of working together at a large steel mill in Portugal, Cristina says the chance to work with iron in a smaller, specialised foundry like Dania was too good to pass up.

And so she moved to Denmark while Pedro, an industrial engineer, continued working in Lisbon and looking for work in Denmark. "I just sent out a bunch of CVs and began calling companies at that time," Pedro explains. "And within about four months, I had an offer from a company located not too far from where Cristina was working." Pedro packed the rest of their things, including their cat Polaroid, and headed north.

"It was too good to pass up," Cristina says. "And the quality of life was very high here, so I knew it was here I was working with Cristina. Again!"

Until recently, the couple actually had offices right next door to one another. Cristina has since moved a few meters down the hall and around the corner. "Our working at the same company was not a condition to move, no way," says Cristina, laughing. "And we never eat lunch together. But we just ended up in the same situation, and now we are together again in Denmark."

Martina Slingsby

- Researcher in Nutrition, Exercise and Sports at Copenhagen University
- PhD in pharmacology
- UK/Sweden

Martina moved to Denmark in 2013 with her husband who had accepted a job with the energy company, DONG. She quickly found what she calls her dream job as a researcher, studying the effects of exercise on longer term health.

Why did you choose Denmark?

I knew there was a lot going on in Copenhagen in the Pharma and Life sciences. And I knew Copenhagen was a very green city with beautiful nature and parks, where you can just bike everywhere. So the quality of life issue made a big impression.

What has been the biggest cultural difference?

Probably the biggest cultural difference is the level of politeness. It is so engrained in the English culture to be very polite. The Danes are straightforward and that can come across as rude. But we have realised that they don’t do it to be rude. It is just a cultural difference. The politeness is something we appreciate when we go back to London.

Have you been able to make friends?

Yes. Most of our friends are internationals and there are quite a lot of expats and groups in Copenhagen. It has only been until recently that I have been making new friends through my work. In London people went to the pub and were more open about their social life. Here, people keep it a little more private. But we also have a three-month old daughter and through my mother support group we’ve started to venture more and more into the Danish side of things.

What has been the biggest surprise?

I knew the quality of life was very high here. So I’d say probably my job. We are researching the effect of medications when we exercise. They are real experts here. It has been a very exciting area of research and I have even kept the collaboration with my old lab in London and they have been very impressed. That has been fun, I didn’t expect that.

Read her husband’s story on page 4.
Dutch-born Inger Stokkink joined her local sailing club, swims throughout the winter with other enthusiasts, meets other IT nerds at a computer club and has sung with a choir. And has a lot of Danish friends to show for it.

“The workplace is not where you socialise in Denmark, so you need to find other places for that. And I found them by joining a choir and lots of other different clubs. That’s where the action is,” says 51-year-old Inger Stokkink, a freelance journalist who has lived in Denmark since 2010.

When her husband was given a permanent position as a professor of political science at the university in Denmark’s second-largest city, Aarhus, the couple sold their house in Holland and bought a house in a small village outside Aarhus. One of the first things Inger did in the new country was to join a Danish concert choir. “I sang in a choir as a young girl and realised from relocating in the past that it’s a great way of meeting new people and becoming integrated in the local community. Singing in Danish also taught me the music and pronunciation of the Danish language,” she explains in fluent Danish.

Making friends at the sailing club
In Denmark she’s also realised a childhood dream by learning to sail. As she lives close to the sea, she joined the local sailing club. Then after taking sailing lessons she bought her own boat, and now has a large network of other sailors at the club. “I’ve learnt to sail with no one but Danes I didn’t know. But when we’re aboard a boat on the open sea, we have to talk to each other. It wasn’t easy to start with but today I know a lot of people at the sailing club. Sharing a hobby makes you feel you belong.”

Chatting in the sauna and hacker space
She is also a member of a club for ‘winter bathers’. During the six months of winter, the sea around Denmark is close to freezing point and many Danes enjoy the chilly thrill of jumping into the cold water and then relaxing together in a lovely hot sauna.

‘My winter bathing club has a declared expectation that members must be open to getting to know other people. Danes can seem rather reserved and rarely make the first move to engage in conversation. But they thaw out when they’re sitting in a hot sauna.’

The club usually holds parties too. For example, the sailing season is celebrated by hoisting the sailing club flag and every year clubs hold Christmas parties. Inger Stokkink has found this a great way of learning Danish traditions and customs. However, it’s also demanding and she’s looking forward to the next meeting held by her computer club “Open Space Aarhus”.

“As a foreign national, being outgoing and adapting to a different culture sometimes wears me out. Then it’s nice to go to the computer club in a nerdy environment where people understand that it’s OK to be different and not always do things the Danish way,” she says.”

Networking after hours
“When your family has settled in Denmark, it’s important to work on your network,” says Tiny Maerschalk, project manager at the International Community in Aarhus. She offers the following advice on how to build your network:

Join clubs, societies and networks in your local area and participate in different kinds of events. The Danes are a little reserved and most of them go straight home after work to spend time with their families and engage in their recreational activities. That’s why it’s a great idea to join clubs if you want to meet Danes in a natural way. Meet other people who are in the same situation as you. A number of international clubs arrange social events where international families can meet and learn more about Denmark and Danish culture.

Create your own profile on relevant websites. This will help you get in touch with other international families or Danes interested in meeting families from abroad. It may also put you in contact with new professional partners or other expats who share the same interests as you.

Learn Danish. Even though you might find it difficult to begin with, it really pays off. Involve your partner in your social activities. Since many partners don’t have a job, they often feel isolated. There are lots of communities that help partners get into networks or charity projects – and some also help people look for jobs or find relevant project work.
Your five first words in Danish

‘Hygge’
Cosiness, relaxing, having a good time. Danes love to ‘hygge’ and use this word a lot.

‘Rugbrød’
At lunch, many Danes eat rye bread with cold cuts of meat etc. – unless they have a hot meal served in the company canteen. Danes have been eating rye bread for millenniums and many, especially older Danes, can’t live without it. Some pack it in their suitcases when traveling abroad.

‘Christmas lunches’ (‘Julefrokost’)
At most workplaces, Christmas lunches (and summer parties) are a regular tradition for all the employees, where everyone eats and is entertained together. Many families visit each other and eat traditional Danish meals between Christmas and the New Year.

The happiest nation

The Danes live comfortable and safe lives – and time after time, Denmark is nominated the world’s happiest nation.

In several surveys, the Danes rank as the people with the highest life satisfaction in the world. But why should the Danes be happier than other nations? Christian Bjørnskov, a Danish researcher who’s looked into the criteria for life satisfaction, ventures one explanation: the Danes place great trust in their fellow citizens.

“Generally, the Danes don’t need to fear corruption or violence on trains,” he says. “If you lose your wallet in Copenhagen, you’re very likely to get it back – although sometimes the money might be missing. We live in a safe society, we trust our fellow citizens, and we don’t have the kind of worries that other nationalities have to deal with on a daily basis.”

The Danes have the highest life satisfaction score

The Eurobarometer survey 2016 measures individual wellbeing by asking respondents: “On the whole, how satisfied are you with the life you lead?” 98 percent of the Danish respondents declared themselves “satisfied” with the life they live, which is an impressive score. By comparison, the degree of life satisfaction across the European Union averaged at 81 percent according to this survey. In countries such as Greece and Bulgaria less than a half of the population declared themselves satisfied with the life they lead.

Working parents

During the day, most Danish residential areas are rather deserted. In three out of four Danish families, both parents work and their children are in day care.

Denmark is among the countries in the world with the highest proportion of women on the labour market: it also rates very high when it comes to gender equality.

There are more female than male students enrolled in higher education, and the Danish labour market is governed by equal pay legislation. Generally, women still receive smaller monthly salaries than their male counterparts, but that’s because the jobs that typically attract women have a lower salary level than professions that are traditionally male dominated.

Danish women still do most of the housework – approx. 60 percent according to a recent study – but in many families, the couple share domestic duties. And it’s quite natural for Danish men to cook, do the shopping and spend time with their children.

Europe’s most satisfied people

Source: Eurobarometer 85 (May 2016)

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Equality also plays a big part. Both in terms of things like gender, but really, also the idea of sharing. As a girl who grew up in Thatcher’s Britain, the idea of sharing was hard for me to get my head around – but well worth it in the end.

What advice would you give someone who wants to get to know the Danes?

Join a club. I joined loads of clubs and found choir and yoga were really good for me. Researching into happiness, I found out that singing improves well-being and yoga can reduce stress, and so I signed up for both. And I found that Danes love breaking into song (you don’t even need to know the words!)

I would say just be brave and get out there and introduce yourself. Once you have a support network, anything is possible.

What was most challenging for you in terms of the most challenging thing a lot of people would say is the language – I’m still not very good at it!

Well, one year slipped to two and then to three and this will be our fourth year. We don’t think we will be here forever, but we are still pretty happy living Danishly.

So what happened to just one year of living Danishly?

Helen Russell

- Freelance Journalist
- UK
Let’s help you find a job in Denmark

Finding a job in Denmark isn’t simple, but there are ways to make the hunt easier.

High wages, free welfare ... and high taxes

Income tax is high in Denmark. But this is counterbalanced by higher wages and many free welfare services that are very expensive in other countries.

Denmark is a classic welfare state. Helping fellow citizens when they get ill, become old or lose their jobs is considered a joint responsibility. The same goes for high quality childcare and free schooling for everyone.

This explains why Danes are one of the highest taxed populations. When it comes to income tax, most citizens pay almost half of their salary in tax. In addition, most goods include 25 percent VAT (‘Moms’ in Danish). Cars, petrol, alcohol and other goods are also taxed in order to limit consumption.

Like the taxes, Danish salary levels are among the highest in the world, and many welfare services that strain household budgets in other countries are either free or state-subsidised in Denmark. Medical help, hospital treatment, schooling and elderly care are all free – and day care for children is far cheaper than in other countries. This means that the purchasing power in the Danish capital of Copenhagen is the same as in other European cities.

Researchers and highly-paid employees can get tax reductions

In terms of taxation, researchers and highly-paid employees in Danish companies can get favourable terms, including a considerably lower income tax rate, if they are recruited abroad. However, a set of specific conditions will have to be met to take advantage of this tax scheme for researchers and highly-paid employees.

High salaries give good purchasing power

The cost of living is said to be high in Denmark. But average net wages here are also high. That’s why actual purchasing power is relatively high. It takes less working time to buy an iPhone in Copenhagen than in Budapest, Delhi, Beijing and Madrid.

How do I apply?

With more than 1,000 vacant positions, Workindenmark.dk is a good place to gain an overview of jobs for English speakers in Denmark. Many other positions are posted in other job databases and on company websites. Workindenmark has published a folder ‘Tips for your job search’ that clearly lists these Danish job sites.

A good CV counts

You must have a good CV that targets Danish employers. In many other parts of the world, employers want a CV to briefly list qualifications and work experience. In Denmark, however, they must also reflect your personality, and Danish job applicants spend a lot of time perfecting their CVs. If you’re searching for a job while based outside Denmark, it’s a very good idea to get advice on writing a CV – from Workindenmark.dk and other sources. You can post our CV in Workindenmark’s CV bank free of charge so that companies can see which jobs interest you.

Personal advice on finding a job

When you find a job you want, Workindenmark can help you engage in dialogue with your potential employer, which covers how to apply for the job and present yourself at a job interview. See box.

Help getting started

Workindenmark offers a range of help for employees who have recently arrived from abroad and their accompanying families, including:

• The guide “Welcome to Denmark”, a copy of which will be given to you during your first interview with us.
• Information about how to find a job for your spouse/partner and on language training etc.
• A single point of access to Danish public administration – via the scheme International Citizen Service (ICS). This means that all paperwork and guidance related to settling in Denmark can be dealt with in one place.
• Information on labour market rules for foreign workers and companies in Denmark, including efforts to combat social dumping.

Tips for job seekers in Denmark

• Check whether you have the relevant qualifications for the job and whether you qualify for a Danish work and residence permit.
• Use your network.
• Get help and advice from job-seeking experts.
• Post your CV at workindenmark.dk.
• Target your application to suit Danish employers, and make sure the application is short and precise.

Read more about the Danish tax system and conditions for a special tax scheme for foreign researchers and highly-paid employees at skat.dk/english.

Read more about work and residence permits in Denmark

EU, EEA and Swiss citizens are free to reside, study and work in Denmark. The others who want to work in Denmark must hold a residence and work permit in order to reside and work in Denmark.

A number of schemes have been designed to make it easier for highly qualified professionals to get work and residence permits in Denmark.

How to get a work and residence permit in Denmark

If you qualify for any of the schemes, you can bring your partner and children under the age of 18 if you can document that you are able to support your family while staying in Denmark.

Read more about work and residence permits at newtodenmark.dk
Attractive qualities

Here are some of the important personal qualities Danish employers typically look for in an applicant:

- initiative
- ability to work independently
- team player
- personal and professional enthusiasm
- good communication skills

Finding a balance in Grindsted

Time is on Maria Perez’s side since moving to Denmark; time that she and her family are using together to, among other things, learn the notoriously difficult Danish language.

It was three o’clock in the morning and Maria Perez was on duty in the emergency room in Andalusia in Spain when the e-mail arrived that would change everything.

“It was a job alert saying that there were open positions for General Practitioners in Denmark,” she says “and I thought, ‘this must be a sign’.”

For Maria, a three-hour daily commute, a constant overload of patients and weekend duty obligations had taken their toll. She had little time with her husband, Juan, a freelance interior designer, and their daughters, Lucia, 12, and Ana, 9.

“The timing was just right for us. We wanted a new adventure and we had heard a lot about the quality of life in Denmark. So we thought – ok, we will try this.”

Maria, 39, responded to the e-mail and within 14 days had her first Skype interview. She then came to Denmark to visit five clinics in two days. The family’s choice landed on Grindsted, a small town of 10,000 located in the middle of Denmark and one of the many places in the country experiencing a shortage of doctors.

“My plans are to work as a substitute doctor for a time and, eventually, buy my own clinic here,” she says.

More patient and family time

As she parks her red bicycle in front of the practice where she is now working, Maria says one of the biggest differences she has experienced working in Denmark is the amount of time she has with each patient.

“I worked at a public clinic in Spain, but the system was overloaded. We had about six minutes for each patient. I never ate breakfast because I needed the time for appointments,” she says. “But here this is quite, quite different.”

Her five-minute commute by bicycle has also meant more time with the family. A change the entire family could feel from the very beginning.

“I remember the first weekend after we moved to Denmark, my daughter Lucia told me. ‘Mum, it is Saturday and you are here!’” she says.

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As their daughter Lucia taps a message into her telephone to a school friend from the local private school, where the girls have been enrolled from day one. Maria shakes her head.

“I don’t know how they do it, they learned the language just like that!” she says, snapping her fingers. “We are trying to learn from them now, too.”

Learning the language

“Learning the language has been the hardest part, for sure,” she says, “but it is not as much of a barrier as you might expect.

Danes speak very good English, too, and so we figure it out and laugh together a lot.”

Part of the reason the family chose Denmark was to learn a new language and culture together. Since arriving, Maria and Juan have been in intensive Danish courses, which are free in the start to anyone moving to Denmark. Maria has split time between the clinic and classes and Juan has taken a part-time job at a hospital in the nearby city of Vejle to get practical language experience.

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Assessing foreign qualifications

When looking for a job in Denmark, it might be helpful to have an assessment from the Danish Agency for Higher Education. This brief statement describes what your foreign qualifications correspond to in Denmark: Which educational level and, if possible, which field of education. An assessment can make qualifications easier to understand for Danish employers. It’s no guarantee of employment, however.

If your profession is regulated by law, you don’t need to ask for a qualification assessment. Instead, you must apply for an authorisation to work within your profession. This rule applies if you work with various hazardous materials or heavy machinery, for instance, and if you are employed in certain healthcare professions.

If you are a citizen of an EU/EEA country or Switzerland and work in Denmark for short periods of time only, it might be sufficient to send a declaration to the public authority that regulates the sector you work in.

At ufm.dk/recognition – you’ll find information about recognition and transparency of qualifications.
The Danish weather

A democracy and a modern monarchy

Denmark is a parliamentary democracy. The Danish parliament is called ‘Folketinget’, and the Danes elect their parliamentary representatives at least every four years. But Denmark is also a monarchy, currently with a Queen as its ceremonial head of state. The Danish royal family has no political influence, but is of great symbolic value to the Danes. The members of the royal family are actively involved in Danish society through their many representative duties. And as most Danes are proud of their royals, they follow events in this family closely in the columns of tabloids and weekly magazines.

The Danish monarchy goes back more than a thousand years, and has become very international in recent years. Queen Margrethe and her two sons, Crown Prince Frederik and Prince Joachim have all married non-Danes.

Design and architecture

Appreciated all over the world, Danish design is characterised by simplicity and functionality. Furniture classics by designers such as Arne Jacobsen, Børge Mogensen and Hans Wegner are collector’s items that command high prices at Danish and international auctions.

Many famous buildings all over the world have been designed by Danish architects. Jørn Utzon drew the Sidney Opera House and the houses of parliament in Kuwait. Jan van Spreckelsen is responsible for the Grande Arche de la Fraternité in Paris. Bjarke Ingels who became worldly-renowned for his housing projects in Copenhagen such as 8 House is currently working on Google’s new headquarter in California and 2 World Trade Center in New York.

On the home front, Danes enjoy entering within the comfort of their own four walls. The primary venue for socialising. Most even prefer inviting friends over for dinner rather than going to a restaurant. Compared to the way many other nations decorate their homes, Danish interiors are generally very sparse – with only a few, quite simple, pieces of furniture. Even though less is more, the Danes spend a great deal of time and money on decorating their homes. The Danish climate might explain this. The winter season in Denmark is cold and dark; the temperature drops around 0°C / 32°F and stays there for months. With so much time spent indoors, it stands to reason that the Danes display a warm affection for interior decorating.

Then when the summer finally arrives, and it’s warm and light until almost midnight, the Danes can’t wait to get on their bikes and enjoy the fresh air.

“The Iceberg – iconic modernist-architecture residential buildings on the waterfront in Aarhus.”

Michelin stars and pastry

Danish gastronomy is celebrating great triumphs, but Danes also enjoy a regular hotdog.

Danish and Nordic cuisine has risen to great heights during the past few years. A number of Danish restaurants have been awarded Michelin stars by the prestigious gourmet restaurant guide, and Geranium in Copenhagen became in 2016 the first restaurant with three stars in Denmark.

Another Copenhagen-based restaurant Noma, which for some years has been named one of the best restaurants in the world. Gourmet enthusiasts, “foodies”, fly in from all over the world just to enjoy Nordic fine dining at top-notch restaurants in Denmark.

When it comes to everyday food, however, Danish cuisine is quite down-to-earth. The Danes eat a lot of meat, typically accompanied by potatoes. Pasta and rice dishes are also quite popular.

But you will also be introduced to specialties such as Danish pastries, marinated herring and open sandwiches piled high with delicious cold meats.

“The killing” is just one internationally acclaimed TV series produced by Denmark in recent years.

The Danes’ love culture

The Danes are the EU nation that spends the most time and money on culture.

Some 5.5 percent of the Danes’ total spending is devoted to books, films, and other forms of culture compared with the EU average of around 3.5 percent. In line with Sweden, Finland and Netherlands. Denmark has Europe’s largest share of workers employed in the culture sector after Luxembourg. In recent years, Danish TV and film production has stepped into the international limelight in grand style.