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.
Learn Danish

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

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.

There are a lot of practicalities to deal with when you move to Denmark. You need to get a work and residence permit, and you have to register with various local authorities. It’s also important to get your taxes, doctor and Danish driver’s licence sorted out as soon as possible.

International Citizen Service (ICS) is there to help. ICS makes contacting Danish authorities as easy as possible for you and your family.

All the authorities you typically need to contact are represented at ICS. So in most cases, you’ll only need to visit an ICS office to take care of paperwork and find answers to your questions. You can complete all your registrations at our offices – and get the help you need to start your working life in Denmark.

You will find an ICS office in each of the four largest Danish cities: Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg.

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.

Alice Bogoni

- Immigration and relocation specialist, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Master’s Degree, Literature and Didactics, University of Padua
- Italy

After just five years in Denmark, Alice Bogoni speaks Danish fluently. She’s purchased a co-op apartment in Copenhagen and is in her third job since arriving from Italy in 2011.

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 hard was it to find work? Once you are established with language, it is easier to show people what you can do. There is a lot of mobility in the job market. It is easy to change jobs and people are generally flexible with regards to background and education. If you show you can get the job done, there are fewer formal requirements here than in many other places.

How would you compare the Italian and Danish work cultures? In Italy, the job that I have now would take all my time and I would be more stressed. Here, being busy doesn’t always equate with being stressed. People tend to help one another more and it is okay to admit that there are things you are unsure of, or unable to do alone.

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 buying a co-op, which I have just moved into. It has given me a little more peace and stability in regards to living in Copenhagen.

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 minds

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 (currently known as Ørsted).

“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 I 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. 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 a network has helped us land 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 participants 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 detail of a project, 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.
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-kasser). 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 total income the past three years has been at least 233.376 kr. (2019-rate).

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.

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.

Flexible working hours

Danish workplaces are characterised by a good work-life balance. Many employees have flexible working hours. Danish working hours are usually between 8.30am and 4.30pm, and overtime is not common in Denmark. All employees have the right to five weeks’ paid holiday a year – many even have six weeks.

The new holiday act will enter into effect on 1 September 2020 and allow employees to take paid holidays in the same year as they accrued. The holiday year will run from 1st September to 31st August. You earn 2.08 paid holidays per month and can spend in the same holiday year or no later than 31 December in the following year.

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 qualifications for the job. Admit to mistakes.

Motivate your staff. If you’re a manager provide challenges and professional development. Bonuses and 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 deference. as this only creates distance.

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.

Alistair came to Denmark in 2011 as a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Southern Denmark. Since then, he has moved to ‘Medicon Valley’ in Copenhagen, where he is a scientist in the pharmaceutical industry.

What’s the strongest impression you have of Danish culture?

The focus is quite different between Australia and Denmark. There is definitely a healthy balance between work life and home life here and it is important to give something back to your family and have about to have a son and I have not seen a better system anywhere for families. The support from the state and the workplace is very strong. I think even a place like the UK where you have strong social programmes, is not as strong. That difference is very attractive when you consider everything that impacts your work and life.

What about the workplace? What differences do you see there?

One thing I have noticed in Denmark in a professional setting is that there is a very flat structure in companies. As a junior member of a team you are encouraged to interact with the senior members. Here it is looked at positively that people contribute in all ways and I think that gives a good spread of opinions.

But is the ambition level high enough?

Yes, definitely. The quality of life thing doesn’t come at the cost of ambition or productivity. At least I haven’t experienced that. One of the reasons we were so keen on Denmark is we knew there was a strong biotech/medtech industry here in Denmark. And it is very significant and competitive globally.

What has been your biggest challenge?

I think the biggest challenge, or maybe not challenge but shock, was the length and darkness of the winter. It is not so much the cold – you can dress your way around that – but the darkness is tough. You get used to it and with regards to the weather being nice, you have many more nice things in Denmark in the summer. In Sydney in the summertime you can’t stay out for more than an hour at a time. Here, when it is a nice day, you can use the whole day. For me and my wife, having those long, long days in the summer is wonderful. It outweighs the bad times.

What would you say to expats considering a job in Denmark?

If you are looking only at the career aspect, there might be some places just as good or better, but looking at everything in a holistic way Denmark is hard to beat.
Public and private healthcare

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

Childcare options consist of:
- day nurseries and local childcare (in private homes) for children 0-3 years old
- kindergartens (‘børnehave’) 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 ‘børnehave’. 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.

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, which means that municipalities now have the opportunity to set up international basic schools.
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 with a company located not too far from where Cristina was.'

Pedro packed the rest of their things, including their cat Polaroid, and headed north. ‘After about a year, the company I was working with here in Denmark did a round of layoffs and I lost my job,' says Pedro. ‘But almost immediately, there was an opening at Dania,' says Pedro. ‘And before you knew it 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. Pedro says it is an example of the flexibility of the job market and the relative ease for finding good engineering jobs. A task, he adds, that was much easier after moving to Denmark. ‘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.’

‘It has been a very exciting area of research and I have even kept that experience permit is valid. Workindenmark can assist you online with an e-learning courses and onsite with a job search seminar. You can take our online e-learning course to learn more about writing a targeted cover letter and CV in a Danish context. You can also upload your CV to our CV bank and use the job bank. Some Danish companies also offer counseling and network for accompanying partners. For more information about our services check out page 10.'

Further information: workindenmark.dk newtodenmark.dk

In Denmark and together again

Job-seeking partners

If your partner is an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen, your spouse/partner does not need a permit to work here. As an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen, your partner is allowed to work for the period your residence permit is valid.

Jobindenmark can assist you online with an e-learning courses and onsite with a job search seminar. You can take our online e-learning course to learn more about writing a targeted cover letter and CV in a Danish context. You can also upload your CV to our CV bank and use the job bank.

Some Danish companies also offer counseling and network for accompanying partners. For more information about our services check out page 10.

Further information: workindenmark.dk newtodenmark.dk

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 (currently known as Ørsted). 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.

We were just about to get married and it is quite challenging to start a family in London. When you want to settle down there are limited options there unless you are quite wealthy. So when my husband got the job here, it was a pretty easy choice.

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 though 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.

“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

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 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.

Networking after hours

“When your family has settled in Denmark, it’s important to work on your network,” says Tiny Maerk-schalk, 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.

Danes: The social life

In Denmark, it’s important to work on your network. Danes are rather reserved and rarely make the first move to engage in conversation. However, they’re 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.”

Inger Stokkink has found a shortcut to getting to know the Danes: The social life in numerous clubs.

The most popular sports among adult Danes are fitness training, jogging and hiking. One in three adult Danes go to fitness clubs.

The most popular children’s sports in Denmark are football, swimming and gymnastics and they are played at schools and voluntary sports clubs.
Europe's most satisfied people

43% of the Danes enjoy walks or cycle in parks and forests. 63 percent of all Copenhageners cycle to work, school or university every day.

Gymnastics, football and badminton are the most popular sports associations among adult Danes.

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 nations have to deal with on a daily basis."

The Danes have the highest life satisfaction score

The Eurobarometer survey spring 2018 measures individual wellbeing by asking respondents: “On the whole, how satisfied are you with the life you lead?” 99 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 83 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

In three out of four Danish families, both parents work and their children are in daycare.

Denmark is among the countries in the world with the highest proportion of women on the labour market. The employment rate among Danish women is 76.4 percent.

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 is good for stress, and so I signed up for both. And I found that Danes love breaking into song (you don’t even have to be that good at it!).

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 it is the language – I’m still not very good at it!

So what happened to just one year of living Danishly?

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.

The Danes and daily life
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.

If you want a job in Denmark, it makes sense to gain in-depth insight into how the job market works and get specific help and advice from e.g. the government institution Workindenmark. Workindenmark helps both Danish companies wishing to recruit highly qualified foreign workers and highly qualified job applicants from abroad applying for jobs in Denmark.

Workindenmark.dk is the official Danish website for international recruitment and job seeking. This website includes an extensive job and CV database where you can post your CV or search for vacant positions in your professional field. Danish employers also post job adverts on the site when looking for new employees.

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.

Use Workindenmark’s job database to find jobs you can apply for, and add your CV to Workindenmark’s CV database to get noticed by Danish employers.

At workindenmark.dk you find both job search video tutorials and an E-learning course about job search in Denmark.

E-learning course about job search in Denmark
Make it Work in Denmark is an e-learning course about job search in Denmark. The course consists of four modules where you will get insight, knowledge and tips on finding a job in Denmark.

The four modules are:
• Job search in Denmark
• Contacting companies and succeed in job interviews
• The use of LinkedIn in your job search
• An introduction to Danish workplace culture

Watch the video tutorials and conduct the E-learning course to enhance your chances of getting a job in Denmark.

Personal advice on finding a job
When you find a job you would like to apply for, 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.

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”, information about how to find a job for your spouse/partner and on language training etc.
• A single point of access to Danish officialdom 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.

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 is why actual purchasing power is relatively high. It takes less workingtime to buy an iPhone in Copenhagen than in Budapest, Delhi, Beijing and Madrid.

How to get a work and residence permit 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.

Read more about work and residence permits at newtodenmark.dk

Information about how to find a job for foreign researchers and highly-paid employees who have recently arrived from abroad and their accompanying families, including:
• The guide “Welcome to Denmark”, information about how to find a job for your spouse/partner and on language training etc.
• A single point of access to Danish officialdom 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.

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

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.

10 Finances and finding a job
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, 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 a 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, ‘Mom, it is Saturday and you are here!’” she says. “The work-life balance is definitely the best thing about being here.”

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.

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.”

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 not a 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 EUEEA 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.
Test your knowledge of Denmark

1. How much did wind power make up the total electricity consumption in Denmark in 2018?
   a) 26 pct.
   b) 41 pct.
   c) 52 pct.

2. Besides the Jutland peninsula, Denmark consists of a number of inhabited islands. How many?
   a) 122
   b) 130
   c) 160

3. How many languages is the famous Danish poet and author H.C. Andersen fairy tales translated into?
   a) 12
   b) 48
   c) 72

4. How high is the highest point in Denmark?
   a) 170.66 meters
   b) 210.54 meters
   c) 344.42 meters

5. The hottest temperature ever recorded in Denmark was:
   a) 29.7 °C
   b) 36.4 °C
   c) 41.2 °C

Answers: 1b, 2c, 3c, 4a and 5b.

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 headquarters in California and 2 World Trade Center in New York.

On the home front, Danes enjoy entertaining within the comfort of their own four walls. The primary venue for socialising is the home. 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.

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 years. In 2019 27 Danish restaurants located throughout the country have been awarded Michelin stars by the prestigious gourmet restaurant guide. 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, gained the first Michelin star for Scandinavian food in 2003. Gourmet enthusiasts “foodies”, fly in from all over the world just to try 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 iceberg – iconic modernist-architecture residential buildings on the waterfront in Aarhus.”

The Danes

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.

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

Waving to HM the Queen in front of the royal castle in Copenhagen is a popular event for many families – pictured here celebrating her 40-year reign in 2012.

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.

In Denmark the Danes can’t wait to get on their bikes and enjoy the fresh air.