

Welcome to Denmark



Trapholt, Kolding



Fredericia



Living and working in Denmark

What are the best and worst things about living in Southern Denmark?

Get advice from 16 internationals on how to settle well in Denmark...

What is the best thing about living in Denmark?

Dora, Hungary:

People are nice and most of the time helpful.

Arvind, Mauritius:

Feeling safe. Polite people. Great public infrastructure and transport system. When living in The Triangle Region, you are very well positioned to move around the country, (e.g. commute for a job.) It's a peaceful corner, and life is more slow-paced than in the big cities.

Liliana, Peru:

The safety and trust among people!

Alicia, Mexico:

The best thing is my husband and our life together. I love living in Denmark! Not only because I have wonderful friends and family but also because the work-life balance is great.

Nathalie, France:

People are welcoming and really helpful.

Nichole, USA:

The best thing about living in Denmark is the opportunity to slow life down and truly have the time to „hygge“ with family and friends. The shorter working hours, the relaxing holidays, the rhythms of traditions, the slower pace of life and the beauty of nature in the Triangle Region all create the ideal opportunity for you to really get to know people – and yourself – at a deeper level.



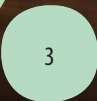
Nina, Canada:

The decency and sense of social responsibility on various levels. Denmark is truly one of the few socially democratic countries and its investment in its citizens allows for social mobility and a high standard of living. Free education and lots of opportunities for self-development are cornerstones of Danish society. Other countries should adopt these kinds of models. I am so grateful for having been able to return to university here.



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Behrooz, Iran:

I can trust Danish people and they are mostly friendly and supportive.

Antje, Germany:

Work-life balance: Working from 8 am -4 pm, no more than that.

Becca, USA:

Living in Billund we not only learned about the Danish culture, but we met people from dozens of countries. Surrounded by so many cultures adapting to Denmark was really fantastic. The thing about Denmark is that it is often referred to as a mono-culture. Which, may seem strange or off-putting at first, but you will grow to love the deep traditions and rhythm of life. Cut daffodils at the tail end of winter show up in shops reminding you spring is coming, specific foods around the holiday, particular breads and cheeses. At first you will feel a little

rebellious or out of sync when doing something differently, and in time you grow to appreciate the steep traditions. And maybe make some jokes about revolt when combining the wrong Danish foods together... For example eating Æbleskiver for breakfast in May rather than by candlelight in afternoon in November as any civilized Dane would do :)

We shared laughs with other internationals as we all learned the charm of the Danish culture.

We also enjoyed the fact that we could travel easily from Denmark. Billund airport made it easy as well as road trips around Europe. Oh! The nature and hiking! Also fantastic! Get out there! Yes, even in the rain.





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What is the worst thing about living in Denmark?

Nathalie, France:

In my case, not to be able to work in my field without speaking Danish.

Arvind, Mauritius:

Bad weather. Businesses close too early.

Alicia, Mexico:

The worst thing is being so far from my family.

Nina, Canada:

No matter how many years one lives here, one never becomes a Dane, which is a great difference from my home country of Canada. Of course, Canada is a country comprised of immigrants from everywhere, but this sense of always being an outsider is tough. However, that said, I think it is remarkable that I am allowed to vote at the municipal level without being a citizen.

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Liliana, Peru:

The weather.

Behrooz, Iran:

It is very hard to find a close friend in the workplace or neighborhood, particularly if you are more than 30 years old.

Antje, Germany:

Long and dark winters, windy and wet weather.

Becca, USA:

For me it was the weather. It can feel a bit isolating at times. Know that you're not alone. Try to get out and walk, even in the rainy and dark times and meet with others. There are likely more people just like you, newly arrived and finding their way. Each has their own path or journey and will have highs and lows at different times. It's important to give each other grace.





What has been the biggest surprise?

Nathalie, France:

Good salary even for jobs like cleaning lady.

Arvind, Mauritius:

The police station closes at 5 pm.

Liliana, Peru:

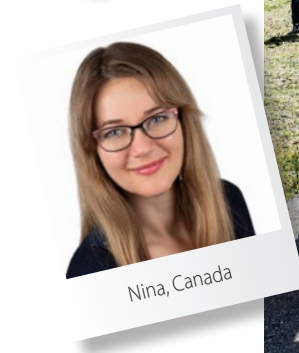
It's difficult to get Danish friends.

Alicia, Mexico:

How the job market works. Sometimes it is quite difficult to land a job.

Nina, Canada:

I didn't realize how closed a society Denmark can be. Unless you have small children and are involved in various kinds of family-oriented activities, it can be very lonely as an adult here. It's difficult to make Danish friends and people plan their calendars in advance. I was used to much more spontaneous kind of socializing.



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Behrooz, Iran:

Danish Language.

Antje, Germany:

Free Danish lessons, but it changes now. It is easy and fast to buy a house. You have to pay a lot of money for your car. The Danish state pays a big part of the tuition fee for private schools. Even though Denmark and Germany are neighbors, there are big cultural differences.

Praewparn, Thailand:

Some Danes underestimate the value of women as people who can fight and travel around and make benefit to the organization. Most of sales managers in Danish companies are men. I am quite surprised that in a country with equality of men and women, when we look on the tough jobs, the company seem to choose men over women.

Becca, USA:

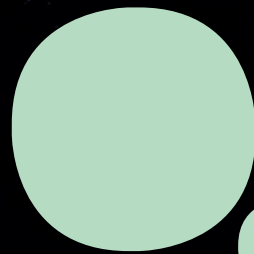
I was surprised at how much networking mattered and how different looking for work in Denmark versus the US could be. I was pleasantly surprised to see that once you're in, the Danes can have a fantastic work environment with wonderful work-life balance.





Vejle

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What would be your advice to other newcomers in the Triangle Region?

The Danish Language

Nathalie (France), Antje (Germany), Lilliana (Peru), Ana (Slovenia):

Learn the Danish language.

Eva, Spain:

Learn/improve your Danish language skills.

Nina, Canada:

I had been given the impression that not speaking Danish at the start wouldn't be a barrier, but it certainly was. I think that those who move here must prioritize learning Danish and come to accept that no matter how proficient one might become, one will never speak it like a Dane.

Network and be open

Eva, Spain:

Get in contact with as many people as possible, network.

Dora, Hungary:

Those who are coming here should be very open and proactive regarding job opportunities. Study in Denmark first, together with the language. Do not come if you don't have a specific area of expertise, otherwise job search without proper Danish language is extremely hard.

Melanie, Germany:

Stay positive and open minded.

Antje, Germany:

Go out and meet people, network, take part in workshops for expats.

Alicia, Mexico:

Be open-minded, don't be afraid of learning new languages or people. Show that you want to be part of it. Attend network events and participate in different activities. Don't be afraid.

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Nichole, USA:

Open your home to others. Invite Danes or other internationals on a walk or for coffee. Relax, be patient yet curious, and slowly a whole new life will open for you.

Other pieces of advice

Alessandro, Italy:

Familiarize with „how it’s done in Danmark“, and comply; we are guests. No-one asked us here, we came to Danmark because we wanted to.

Wilfrido, Mexico:

Set a realistic goal for your relocation and keep it in mind.

Nina, Canada:

I think it is much more difficult to find a job after you have settled here, than if you begin your job search before you arrive. In the beginning, I couldn’t find even the most basic job and no one cared about my outstanding recommen-

dations. As someone who had always been an autodidact, I faced the extra challenge of not having the certifications that said I could do what I can do, so my years of professional experience meant nothing. Thankfully, I am also an internationally certified yoga teacher, so I could find some work that way.

Praewparn, Thailand:

You should not choose the job straight away. Try to be in a Danish workplace even though it is not your work field. You will learn how to fit in to the Danish working culture and it looks good on your CV. The most important thing is that networking is very strong in Denmark.

Becca, USA:

Within the international community it can be quite easy to meet people. Billund and Vejle have active international communities. When looking for a job, it’s worth getting to know the contacts in your municipality (Kommune) who are there to help you. When I worked with Brit she was able

to help me adjust my CV in ways I hadn't been able to in a group workshop. Though workshops are a fantastic way to meet people and expand networks and learn more about Danish work culture. Set up some coffee meetings when you meet someone who has business or company contacts you'd be interested in pursuing. This is a great way to get to know Danes or a business you are interested in. Invite your neighbors for coffee and pastries. You will have a wonderful time getting to know them and begin to pick up on the language more.

The final words of advice comes from Behrooz from Iran:

General advice

- Participate in local events, clubs and the nearest expat communities events as much as possible.

- Get in contact with the local newcomer service.
- Make friends with your neighbors and ask them for advice.
- Make friends with other families through your children if you have some.

Advice regarding jobsearch

- Attend job search workshops and get in contact with job search advisers.
- Participate in the nearest Toastmaster club, because this increases your self-confidence.
- Have a few accessible references (preferably in Denmark) and put their names on the resume.





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- Contact the hiring manager directly and insist if you think you are a good candidate. Most hiring managers value motivated candidates.
- Get experience in the Danish job market through volunteer jobs/internship/part-time jobs (e.g. in the company where your spouse works, if possible.) I started out with a temporary position in the company where my spouse works. After that I was called to several job interviews, and finally landed a great job. I asked my hiring manager, why she picked my resume for the interview. She said, it was because she knew the company I worked for, and because I worked in Denmark and am familiar with Danish work culture.
- Learn the Danish language and use it in your resume and in the interview, even when it is not a requirement.
- We should keep in mind, that there are a thousand ways to find a job in Denmark, which has not yet been tried. Please don't give up, but try to be strong and competitive, until it is your turn to be selected. You are the right one for a job and you just need to be in the right place at the right time.





Thank you to the internationals in the Triangle Area (Trekantområdet) who have taken the time to voice their thoughts on this topic to the benefit of other international newcomers.

Brit Bagger Thorsø

