

Top ten Tourist Attractions in Copenhagen

Tivoli Gardens

Nothing matches the historical and emotional pull that Tivoli Gardens can apply, not to mention the level of charm and, it must be said, sheer elegance. This is no ordinary amusement park. Tivoli captures the very essence of Denmark. A century after opening, it became a national symbol during Nazi occupation in WWII. Royals celebrate birthdays at Tivoli, as do ordinary Danes, and so it is linked to life's major milestones. Funfair rides, Michelin restaurants, orchestral concerts, rock bands, fireworks, White Christmas Markets - Tivoli is an uplifting experience for Danes and an undisputed highlight for any visitor. www.tivoligardens.com

Canal Cruise

Busy people like the option of gliding by key attractions in an hour on Copenhagen's picturesque waterways. Most cruises begin at Nyhavn, home to a cluster of pink, yellow, orange and blue-painted medieval buildings and en route there are fine views of architectural gems such as the Black Diamond - a modern extension to the old Royal Library; Christianborg Palace - seat of Danish Parliament; Borsen - Copenhagen's 17th century stock exchange and Holmen - a three-century-old naval base, plus glimpses of Amalienborg Palace and the statue of the Little Mermaid beside Langelinie Pier. www.visitcopenhagen.com

The Little Mermaid

She may be tiny but the statue of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale character is Copenhagen's best-known monument and the most photographed statue in the world. H.C. Andersen's tale was first published in 1837. It inspired a ballet that so impressed the Carlsberg brewer, Carl Jacobsen that he commissioned the statue for the pleasure of the Danish public. Walt Disney's movie gave a new and happier ending to the Little Mermaid's perilous quest to win her prince. She still waits for him, gazing longingly towards the shore at Langelinie. www.visitcopenhagen.com

Hans Christian Andersen's Copenhagen

Much of the city that H.C. Andersen knew has survived in Copenhagen's neo-classical streetscapes and the pastel-coloured buildings of Nyhavn, where he used to live. Moored sailing boats fill this canal. These days the shores are lined with restaurants and bars but, when H.C. Andersen resided at Nyhavn 20, (later at 18 and 67) he was writing the first of his 156 fairytales. Copenhagen was experiencing a Golden Age, flourishing in art, philosophy and science. H.C. Andersen frequented a library in the Rundetårn, a 17th century observatory that also offers a panoramic view over old Copenhagen today. www.visitcopenhagen.com

Amalienborg Palace

Known from the balcony scene of the real-life fairytale wedding, Amalienborg Palace is the principal residence of the Danish royal family. Every day at noon you can

watch the changing of the guards in the palace courtyard and the ground floor of one of its four rococo-style mansions is also open to the public. Here, furniture and personal items owned by recent generations of royals are displayed exactly as the various kings and queens left them. It's not a scrap like viewing the crown jewels. Royal memorabilia touches a different part of you entirely. www.amalienborgmuseet.dk

Viking roots, Roskilde

The Danish royals can trace their roots back more than a thousand years to a Viking called Gorm the Old who established a royal city at Roskilde, thirty minutes west of Copenhagen. Here you can view five Viking ships at Roskilde Viking Ship Museum and, in the summer months, sail in a replica on Roskilde Fjord. The redbrick Roskilde Cathedral is the resting place of 39 Danish monarchs, the first being Gorm's son Harald Bluetooth, the last one the father of Princess Mary's mother-in-law, Queen Margrethe II. www.vikingskibsmuseet.dk

Shopping time

Princess Mary is known for her interest in Danish design and fashion, the success of which is immediately apparent on Stroget, a pedestrian-only shopping street running from Kongens Nytorv to Town Hall Square. Here you'll find Georg Jensen silver, Royal Copenhagen porcelain, Holmegaard glassware and flagship fashion stores plus department stores stocked with well-established Scandinavian labels. The nearby Latin Quarter is full of avant-garde, second-hand bargain clothing and small boutiques. Bredgade district near Amalienborg Palace specializes in antiques, art and cutting-edge design and the city's weekly flea markets sell everything from antiques to glassware. www.visitcopenhagen.com

Local lives, Vesterbro

Gentrification of inner-city Vesterbro is turning a once-grim district of butcher shops and strip joints into a trendy extension of the designer scene and providing an exciting venue for new restaurants, cafes, bars and nightclubs. By day you can get to know a Vesterbro local (past or present) on a 'sound literary' storytelling walk produced by a group of young writers and artists for the Museum of Copenhagen. Walks take place using mp3-players and headphones. They last between 16 and 38 minutes – or considerably longer if you choose to spend some time at places of interest along the way. www.visitcopenhagen.com

Visit a Museum

Museums are useful for filling in knowledge gaps. The National Museum explains Denmark's history from the earliest times. Museum of Copenhagen illustrates the city's development from the Middle Ages to the 21st century. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, founded by Carlsberg brewer, Carl Jacobsen, exhibits international art treasures plus works by Danish Golden Age masters. Thorvaldsens Museum is dedicated to Danish Golden Age sculptor, Bertel Thorvaldsen. The Museum of Danish Resistance tells the story of the Resistance Movement in WWII. Arken Museum of Modern Art exhibits world-class Danish, Nordic and international artworks. Louisiana Museum of Modern Art holds works from 1945 to the present time. www.visitcopenhagen.com

Africa in Denmark

Nothing moves a museum's turnstiles like a love story. Thirty minutes north of Copenhagen is Rungstedlund, former residence of the Danish author Karen Blixen whose life is best known through Meryl Streep's role in the movie, *Out of Africa*. Robert Redford played Blixen's lover, the safari leader, Denys Finch Hatton. He was killed in an aviation accident and Blixen returned home to Rungstedlund where her African paintings are now on display, along with items once owned by Finch Hatton. It is said that every night before retiring she would gaze in the direction of Africa and speak to him. www.isak-dinesen.dk