

THE INTERNA TIO NAL

ISSN 2596-5220



CHOCOLATE SWISS ROLL



LAST WEEK IN
DENMARK



NORDIC CALM



CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND

DECEMBER 2025 - WWW.THE-INTL.COM



DESIGNING SPACE, DESIGNING SELF:
MAJA'S STORY OF STARTING OVER IN DENMARK.

FINDING LIGHT IN THE DARK SEASON

As December settles over Denmark, this season invites reflection as much as celebration. For many of us, it can be a mix of joy, nostalgia, and the ups and downs of adjusting to life here, yet small moments of kindness remind us we're part of something shared. And while Christmas in Denmark is beautifully rooted in tradition, it's the generosity, openness, and connection we extend to one another that truly bring the season to life.

THE QUIET COURAGE OF KINDNESS

As we step into the heart of the festive season, I find myself thinking about kindness - not the grand, cinematic kind we see in *Love Actually* or *The Holiday*, but the quieter moments that happen off-screen, in real life. The kind that shows up in a neighbour who helps you decipher a piece of official mail, a colleague who notices when you're quiet, or a stranger who holds the door a moment longer than necessary.

Kindness is its own form of courage. And for many internationals in Denmark, it is also a lifeline.

Sometimes, though, the darkness of winter and the weight of being far from familiar faces can feel heavy. Denmark, like many places, has experienced a high rate of suicide - a reminder that even when it seems like everyone else is celebrating, some of us may be struggling in silence. If you ever feel overwhelmed or despairing this season, please consider reaching out for help. In Denmark, you can call the **national helpline at 116 123 (available 24/7)** to speak with someone.

And if you know someone who's alone this Christmas - a fellow international, a friend, an acquaintance - consider inviting them in. Sometimes a shared meal, a warm conversation, or just company can make a world of difference.

SEEKING THE POSITIVE AND EMBRACING CHANGE

As we close out the year, I encourage you to look for the positive moments in your life. They may be small, but they are important - a conversation that made you smile, a personal milestone reached quietly, or even the discovery of a new



YEN HA - PIXABAY

ADVERTISEMENT



RYGAARDS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

A values-driven Catholic private school in cozy, historic buildings.

- Solid academic education
- Focus on each student's full potential
- Values such as equality, responsibility, and respect
- A warm, welcoming school community

Visit us at www.rygaards.com/en



RYGAARDS SCHOOL
INTERNATIONAL AND
DANISH DEPARTMENTS

Bernstorffsvej 54
2900 Hellerup
Email: admin@rygaards.com



PIXABAY

favourite café on a cold afternoon. Noticing the good doesn't erase the difficult, but it does remind us that hope and possibility are always present.

And if you're in a season of transition, perhaps searching for a job, rethinking your career, or craving more meaning - this is your moment. December has a way of pushing us inward, urging us to be honest with ourselves about what we want. If you're happily employed, celebrate the stability and satisfaction that brings. If you're seeking something new, take heart: change often begins with the simple belief that something better is possible.

I've seen countless posts and conversations lately about following your passion - especially as we get older. Many people speak as though passion has an expiration date, but I don't believe that. Reinvention is not a privilege; it's a practice. If this season tells us anything, it's that renewal is possible for all of us, whether we're 25 or 65.

PAYING IT FORWARD AND STAYING OPEN TO DENMARK

And while we pursue our individual dreams, let's also take a moment to think collectively. The idea of paying it forward is something I hold dear. A small gesture - an introduction for someone seeking work, offering to review a CV, inviting a newcomer for coffee - these can ripple further than we ever realise. Our international community thrives when we lift each other, when we share what we can, when we look out for the person who might be struggling silently.

At the same time, I encourage all of us to keep an open mind toward Denmark itself. This country has its quirks, its intricacies, its systems that can feel impossible one day and elegantly efficient the next. But it also has immense beauty - both in its people and its values. There is so much to learn here, so much to appreciate. And in return, you bring your languages, your skills, your humour, your curiosity, your stories. That exchange is what makes our community vibrant and resilient.

“KINDNESS IS FREE - YET IT IS THE WEALTHIEST GIFT WE CAN GIVE.” LET THAT BE OUR MOTTO, NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS, BUT FOR THE YEAR AHEAD.

On a personal note, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to my team. This year brought unexpected challenges for my family and me that required time, care, and emotional bandwidth. Throughout it all, my team showed understanding, compassion, and unwavering support. Their dedication to our mission at The International Denmark allowed us to continue doing meaningful work even when life pulled me in a different direction.

To my team: thank you for being steady when I could not be. Thank you for your professionalism, your creativity, and your humanity. I am profoundly grateful.

To our readers: thank you for being part of this community - whether you've been with us for years or just discovered us today. Your engagement, insights, and stories fuel what we do. You remind us why connection matters.

As we move into Christmas and prepare for a new year, I hope you find light in unexpected places. I hope you experience kindness and give it generously. I hope you recognise your own strength, your own contributions, and your own journey - wherever it is taking you next.

And before I sign off, a little teaser: we'll soon be celebrating The International Denmark's 8th birthday with a special get-together in Copenhagen. I would love to see many of you there, so keep an eye on our social channels for details.

Wishing you peace, joy, and moments of true warmth this season.

From my heart to yours,

Lyndsay Jensen
Editor-in-Chief & Founder



CONTACT US

THE INTERNATIONAL

+45 42407624

info@the-intl.com

www.the-intl.com

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & FOUNDER

Lyndsay Jensen - lyndsay@the-intl.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR & PARTNER

Kenneth Macalpine - kenneth@the-intl.com

DEPUTY EDITOR, CONTENT &

PARTNERSHIPS

Ophelia Wu - ophelia@the-intl.com

ADVERTISING SALES

sales@the-intl.com

THE INTERNATIONAL WRITERS TEAM

Ophelia Wu; Alexandra Beck; Mariano Davies; Monika Pedersen; Anna Pawlowicz; Fiona L Smith; Natasha Liviero; Natália Šepitková; Leslea Petersen; Jess Hearne; Natalia E.L. Madsen; Aamna Tauheed; Brooke Taylor Fossey; Diana Medrea-Mogensen; Kelly Draper Rasmussen

LAST WEEK IN DENMARK WRITERS TEAM

Ali Lewis; Sudaay Tat Haznedar; Josephine Basthof; Julia Jones

CREATIVE

COVER PHOTOGRAPHER

[Maja de Silva](#) / Assistant: [Anna Korosadowicz](#)

LAYOUT

The International

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATORS

Helena Parkinson; Shirsha Chakraborty

The International is published online 12 times a year. This issue was published on 11 December 2025.

The publishers regret that they cannot accept any liability for error or omissions contained in this publication. The opinions and views presented need not necessarily reflect those of the publishers. Readers are advised to seek special counsel before acting on any information contained herein. All rights reserved. No part of this publication or contents thereof may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form without written permission from the publishers. Published by and © 2021 The International ApS. Registered in Denmark / CVR Number: 39118181

DESIGNING A LIFE: MAJA'S CREATIVE PATH BACK TO DENMARK



How an international interior designer rediscovered belonging, built a business and balanced motherhood in the country that once shaped her childhood.

Writer: **Lyndsay Jensen** / Photographer: [Maja de Silva](#) / Assistant: **Anna Korosadowicz**

WHEN MAJA DE SILVA first stepped off the plane in Copenhagen eight years ago, the city greeted her with grey skies and the soft promise of rain. To many, that might sound dreary - but for Maja, it felt like homecoming. After all, she had once lived in Denmark as a child, and the memory of cosy homes, candle-lit windows, and evening bicycle rides had stayed with her. As she puts it: "It was my big dream to come back to Denmark." What followed was a journey that intertwined love, loss, motherhood, and a creative rebirth - a story of resilience, adaptation, and redesigning not just interior spaces, but life itself.

FROM BOSTON TO COPENHAGEN - A DREAM REALISED

"Maja relocated from Boston, USA, to Denmark when her then-husband accepted a position at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). She was drawn back not only by the immediate reason of family but by a deep-rooted longing for the country she had once known as a child. "I lived here when I was 9-11 years old," she says, and that early experience planted the seeds of a future return.

She came in the autumn, in October - a fitting season. "I really loved it, loved absolutely everything," she remembers. The wind on her face as she pedalled through Copenhagen's streets, the smell of rain

mingling with the earthy scent of damp pavements, the warm glow of candles in windows behind frosty glass - all nostalgia, all comfort. The Denmark she returned to was more than a location: it felt like coming home.

There was also a practical draw. With a master's degree in interior architecture and prior professional experience in Switzerland, the U.S. and Poland, Maja had the skills and ambition. Her plan was not just to settle - but to build something of her own, a vision now visible in the carefully curated projects on her website, Maja Interiors.

EXPECTATION VS REALITY: DESIGN, DREAMS - AND THE DANISH WAY

As she settled, Maja was struck by how Denmark's famed appreciation for design didn't always align with her expectations for a career in interior architecture. "It's the country of hygge & design," she reflects, "but not so much space/value for an interior architect like me here."

Danish homeowners appeared comfortable setting up their spaces themselves - a minimalist shelf here, a throw pillow there - but rarely embracing a professional to overhaul or deeply curate a home. For someone trained in technical drawings, materials, furniture and spatial flow, this was a surprising cultural gap.

Rather than resign, Maja adapted. She turned toward an underserved niche: internationals. Many internationals come from cultures in which hiring an interior designer is standard practice, and Maja saw an opportunity. She began offering her services to them - to new arrivals, to families renting temporary homes, to people who appreciated her blend of professionalism, empathy and aesthetic sensibility. Recommendations grew naturally through satisfied clients.

In parallel, she kept a part-time job until her business took off. And because she still remembered the Danish language from childhood, learning to speak fluently again became a joyful challenge - one that bridged her past and present.

FROM CITY BUZZ TO QUIET GREEN

Maja's first years in Denmark were spent in Østerbro, where she soaked up the city's creative energy: parks, intimate cafés, neighbourhood shops and easy networking opportunities. The city suited her - a place buzzing with inspiration.

Then came the pandemic, and with it, a shift. During lockdown, she found herself longing for more space, more quiet, more green. She eventually moved to Brønshøj, a peaceful area surrounded by parks, families and birdsong - yet still just a short train ride from the centre.





**“TRUST YOURSELF,
FOLLOW YOUR INTUITION,
FIND YOUR OWN PACE.
YOU ARE THE WRITER
OF YOUR OWN DESTINY.”**

Here she found a slower rhythm that allowed her to breathe, create and parent more intentionally.

DESIGNING A LIFE - INSIDE AND OUT

Running her own creative studio - combining interior design and photography - Maja approaches her work and motherhood as an integrated whole. Her homes are not sterile showpieces; they're soulful, lived-in, functional spaces that embrace beauty and well-being.

Her daily life mirrors that. She calls her career not “busy,” but “balanced.”

She often works from home, allowing her to blend client work with domestic life. Her weeks are carefully structured with meetings, concept development, sourcing trips, photoshoots and school runs. But there is also flexibility - an intentional openness. Some days unfold differently than planned, and she's learned to be okay with that.

Breaks are essential. “As a creative, I need breaks, I need to slow down,” she says - so she walks, rides her bike, swims or sits with quiet. Inspiration, she knows, doesn't come from constant motion but from space.

WHAT DENMARK GAVE - AND WHAT SHE STILL MISSES

Looking back, Maja appreciates the stability and support that Denmark offered her, especially through life's harder chapters. “I appreciate the ease and help I got along my journey,” she says, acknowledging both personal and professional challenges she navigated here.

But coming from Poland - and having lived and worked abroad - she also recalls contexts where interior designers were more in demand, more valued.

Here in Denmark, with its strong DIY tendencies and minimalist cultural confidence, she sometimes misses that sense of being deeply needed in her field.

Yet this gap became the opening for something new. By focusing on internationals and on individuals who seek a more personalised, emotionally attuned interior style, she built a niche all her own - one defined by warmth, connection and trust.

ADVICE FOR CREATIVES CONSIDERING DENMARK

For anyone dreaming of relocating to Denmark for creative work, Maja offers grounded advice:

- **Study the market.** Understand the realities of your creative niche here.
- **Ask the hard questions.** Can your passion support you? Are you motivated enough?
- **Observe other creatives.** What works for them? What doesn't?
- **Follow your intuition.** Ultimately, the move has to feel right.

Her message empowers rather than romanticises:



Denmark can be wonderful - but success requires awareness, adaptability and authentic self-belief.

MOTHERHOOD, CREATIVITY AND FREEDOM

Motherhood reshaped her professional life significantly. She prioritises time with her son - school, hobbies, friends - and is grateful for the shared custody that gives both structure and breathing room. Her friends, both in Denmark and abroad, have become her chosen family.

She has learned to carve out “her” time - not as self-indulgence, but as necessity. She wants her son to grow up with a mother who is present, fulfilled and balanced. And being self-employed gives her that freedom: the ability to choose, to shape, to design her life as she designs interiors - intentionally and with heart.

LOOKING AHEAD - QUIET DREAMS GROWING

Maja no longer believes in planning life years ahead. Instead, she stays open to what comes, growing her business at her own pace, and letting new dreams unfold privately until they’re ready to be shared.

Her purpose remains clear: to make people feel good in their spaces, to capture beauty through her lens, and to inspire others - especially women - to trust themselves and create lives that feel true.

Her story is a reminder that moving countries isn’t just a logistical challenge - it’s a chance to redesign your existence.

As she says: “Trust yourself, follow your intuition, find your own pace. You are the writer of your own destiny.”

Maja is an interior architect and photographer based in Copenhagen who runs her own studio offering interior design and styling services. She helps create personal, functional and cosy interiors tailored to your space and budget. If you’d like to contact her, have a look at her [website](#).



“INSPIRATION DOESN’T
COME FROM CONSTANT
MOTION - IT COMES FROM SPACE.”



BETWEEN DREAMS AND INCLUSION

In this feature, **Aamna Tauheed** traces Cveta's path from Albanian aspirations to Danish challenges, uncovering what inclusion truly demands.

CVETA FIRST ARRIVED in Denmark in 2019, not with plans to build a career or fully embrace Danish life, but out of curiosity. She visited as a tourist with her fiancé to enjoy its cobblestone streets and experience the concept of Dansk hygge (Danish co-siness). Her short trip gradually became something more meaningful. "When you visit a country that matches your vibe, that was Denmark for me," she shared while smiling at the beginning of our virtual meeting.

AN ECONOMIST CHOSE DENMARK WITH HEART AND HOPE

Born and raised near Lake Prespa, a region divided among Albania, North Macedonia, and Greece, she was at a crossroads of different cultures, part of a minority population with its own traditions and values, yet respecting the Albanian one. Cveta earned a bachelor's degree in Economics and completed two master's degrees: one in Marketing from Tirana, Albania, and another in International Economic Relations from Sofia, Bulgaria. "Professionally, I am an economist, and in my hometown, I worked closely with local communities and led the implementation of environmental and sustainable projects on-site. "That's how my professional journey began," she recalled.

Cveta loved her work, but living in a rural area felt limited due to a lack of opportunities. "I love home, but when I think about building a family and career success, it's not enough. There were no schools, no infrastructure and no opportunities to flourish. I am inquisitive by nature and have always wanted to explore, thrive, and achieve both professionally and personally. When I visited Denmark, I fell in love with it because I love countries with history. Certain places tell stories through their streets and the people who inhabit them. Denmark has a unique magic and beauty. Its tranquillity, orderliness, and social safety are strongly appealing, and that's why I shifted here in 2022 with my partner," said Cveta while discussing her reasons for moving to Denmark.

STARTING OVER - AND STARTING AGAIN

Adjusting to Danish life, she quickly signed up for a language course and completed it efficiently within the course time. "I'm a language person," she says with a smile. "I speak seven languages, so Danish wasn't difficult for me. I just needed to practice."

Her daughter was born in Denmark, which she considers a boost that has made her new life even more meaningful and inclusive. Denmark is a symbol of safety, a good healthcare system, excellent



PERSONAL PICTURE

education, and social security, which gives Cveta peace of mind as a parent. Despite this peace, she feels frustrated and tired because she is struggling professionally, regardless of her multilingualism, academic degrees, and professional experience.

THE STRUGGLE TO SUSTAIN THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Cveta's job hunt began months before she even ar-

rived. She researched Danish companies, tailored her CVs, connected with career advisors, and sought advice from employment agencies. "I got all the tips and tricks to approach companies, and I learned how to write a Danish-style cover letter. In my opinion, I did everything right, but still no results in these four years," said Cveta woefully when I asked about her job-seeking experience as an international in Denmark.

Besides her extensive professional experience, she applied for even entry-level positions but rarely got interviews. "Companies considered me over-qualified for entry-level roles. It's not that I mind starting again from the bottom, but due to my experience, I believe I am past that phase." Her frustration isn't unique because many expatriates have similar experiences in Denmark. They sent thousands of applications before landing a professional job in Denmark. The entire job-seeking process in the challenging Danish market, with constant rejections, can trigger feelings of self-doubt among many internationals. "At first, you blame yourself," Cveta admitted during our conversation. "Initially, I thought maybe I'm not good enough and don't know how to find a professional opportunity here. After meeting several career advisors and guides who analysed my CV and called my professional experience incredible, I realised that something was beyond me. I don't want to blame anyone, but perhaps the recruitment system in Denmark needs improvement, especially for internationals".

THE RECRUITING LABYRINTH AND LIMITATIONS OF NETWORKING

Cveta's challenges extend beyond her personal story. She straightforwardly stated that, "The hiring process in Europe is a bit of a mess, not just in Denmark." Sometimes people are searching but unsure of what they want. I applied for jobs for which I was well-qualified, but I never received even a screening call to discuss my skills".

She has established connections with other international professionals by attending numerous networking events, but none have yielded success. In her view, networking events may help newcomers in Denmark during their first years, but they are not sustainable over the long term. "I am not against attending networking events, but for me, they help people emotionally rather than practically. It gives a sense of relevance that many people are facing the same challenges and seeking professional opportunities like you, but this is not the solution - what's next?" said Cveta about her experience with networking in Denmark, which many consider a key to accessing the Danish job market. She argued that there's a missing bridge between motivation and real opportunity. "By the third year, one needs a plan rather than comfort. After attending the required or necessary courses, CV workshops, and volunteering, one is expected to grab at least one professional opportunity in the Danish job market."

THE EMOTIONAL TOLL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Three years into her journey in Denmark, Cveta balances freelance work as a remote fundraising officer for an international organisation with local employment opportunities. The gap between her skills and available opportunities weighs heavily on her.

"Looking for a job isn't just about not having professional continuity. It's about losing touch with your skills, confidence, and identity, and this continuous struggle takes a toll on your emotions".

Despite her professional struggles, Cveta's motivation remains rooted in her daughter, and she wants to be a good example for her. "I don't want to put pressure on my daughter by sacrificing my professional dreams for her safety and security in Den-

"THERE ARE SO MANY SKILLED INTERNATIONALS WHO ARE INVISIBLE HERE. THEY'RE NOT UNDERQUALIFIED - THEY'RE STUCK BETWEEN SYSTEMS. DENMARK HAS POTENTIAL, BUT WE NEED MORE THAN POTENTIAL."



PERSONAL PICTURE

mark. In fact, I want to show her that her mother built herself up so she can build upon me because a child can't be happy if their mother isn't happy," said Cveta softly.

DENMARK HAS POTENTIAL - BUT WE NEED MORE THAN POTENTIAL

Cveta carefully chooses her responses when asked about the government's and businesses' support for foreigners. She said, "I think Denmark has a welcoming approach to internationals; however, it needs systemic improvement because welcoming foreigners in the country and actually giving them the integration space are two different things."

Initiatives like #TheForgottenGold matter to her because they reveal the systemic gap and highlight the struggles of internationals living in Denmark. She described it as a movement for change and a voice for internationals seeking visibility and professional opportunities in Denmark. "There are so many skilled internationals who are invisible here. They are not incompetent or underqualified; they're just stuck between systems that don't con-

nect. This is a good country, but I want to see it live up to the values it represents - inclusion, equality, opportunity."

As our conversation concluded, her final message for both policymakers and overlooked foreigners was: "We didn't come only for work purposes. We came here to live, contribute, and belong. Belonging begins when someone believes in your potential."

ABOUT THE WRITER

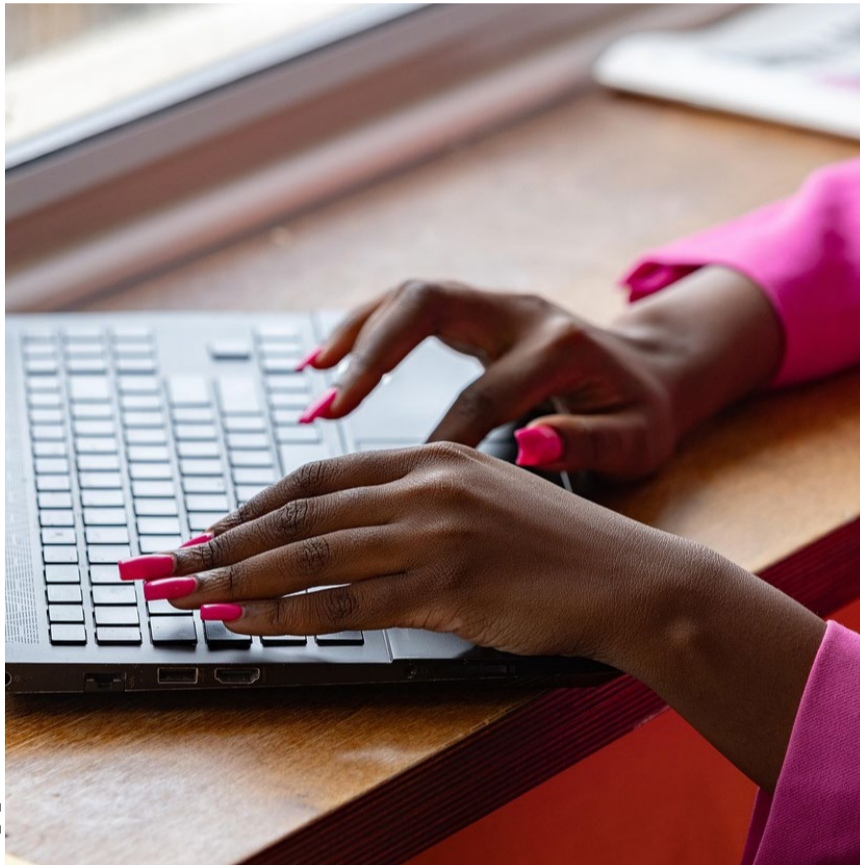
Aamna Tauheed is a Denmark-based copywriter and communications specialist with a strong background in business communications. Passion-

ate about storytelling, she writes compelling content that amplifies brands and drives positive change.



FROM DOWNTIME TO HUSTLE TIME

Leslea Petersen guides you through relaunching your job search with clarity and momentum as you step into the new year.



THIS IS ENGINEERING - PIXABAY

AS DECEMBER SETTLES over Denmark, the air turns crisp, and life slows into that familiar rhythm of seeing Christmas lights everywhere you go, finding ‘hygge’ in the pop-up markets and time for some reflection. It’s a month for celebrating, family, and winding down, yet also the perfect moment to quietly prepare for what’s next. While the world pauses, you can use this time to prepare for the opportunities ahead in the new year.

CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

Before the new year begins, take a quiet moment to think about what you truly want next in your career. There’s little point in sending out applications in January if you’re not clear on your direction. Maybe your 2025 job search didn’t quite go as planned, or perhaps your priorities have shifted. Use this slower month to reflect and reset.

ASK YOURSELF:

- What are my strengths and transferable skills?
- Am I ready to switch industries, or am I simply looking for a new environment?
- What kind of company culture suits me best?
- What values drive my direction?

Getting clear now means you’ll start January with focus and confidence. You’ll be able to target companies that align with your values and tailor your applications to show genuine enthusiasm for both the role and the organisation.

RECONNECT WITH YOUR NETWORK

December is a wonderful time to rekindle professional relationships. Many jobs in Denmark are filled through recommendations and informal networks, so don’t underestimate the power of a friendly message.

Send a short holiday greeting or a “happy new year in advance” note to former colleagues, university mates or contacts. Let them know you’re exploring new opportunities and ask if they’ve heard of anything coming up. Be genuine and curious. Remember, it’s about connection, not just about asking for a job!

Also, consider joining local professional associations, attending industry meet-ups, or taking courses (lots of free ones out there, or for a limited budget). These can be excellent ways to expand your network and stay visible in your field.

BUILD A GOOD JOB-SEARCH ROUTINE

A job search can easily feel overwhelming if it lacks structure. Treat it like a job! Set aside dedicated hours each workday for commenting on LinkedIn, researching for roles, applying, and following up. Keep a record of where you’ve applied and track your progress.

To stay consistent, create a simple weekly plan. For example, Mondays for research, Tuesdays for applications and so on. This rhythm helps you stay focused without burning out. Remember to include short coffee breaks! A clear routine not only keeps you productive but also gives you a sense of control and progress, even when results take time to show.

KEEP LEARNING AND UPSKILLING

If your job search has been longer than expected, consider using the time to upskill. Even a short course in project management, extra Danish classes, or communication skills can boost your confidence and market value.

Continuous learning not only enhances your CV but also shows initiative, which Danish employers deeply respect.

STAY HEALTHY AND POSITIVE

Winter in Denmark can feel long and dark, especially when you’re in the middle of a job search, but looking after your wellbeing will keep your energy and mindset strong. Get outside, enjoy some fresh air, and even a short walk in the daylight can lift your mood. Keep a routine that includes movement, nourishing food, and time with friends. Staying connected and active helps you stay positive and resilient, even when progress feels slow. Remember, this season is temporary, and every small step you take now is moving you closer to your next opportunity.

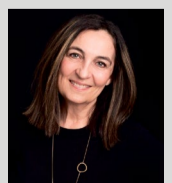
CELEBRATE YOUR PROGRESS

Even small steps count. Every application, interview, and new contact is a win worth celebrating. Job hunting isn’t easy; we know that, but being consistent in your job search and proactive on social media will reward you in the end. Be visible.

So, as you sip a gløgg and enjoy the festivities, take a moment to plan your next move. The new year is just around the corner, and with a bit of reflection, preparation, and self-care this December, you’ll step into January ready to shine and seize the opportunities waiting for you.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Leslea Petersen is the CEO of English Job Denmark, helping professionals and businesses retain international talent. With 20+ years in communications, she is passionate about diversity, recruitment, and supporting inclusive workplaces.



LYKKELIGA: EVERY CHILD IS A PART OF THE TEAM

From one training session to a countrywide movement, LykkeLiga shows the power of joy-driven inclusion. **Anna Pawlowicz** explores how it all began - and why it matters.



LYKKECUP2024

IF YOU'VE EVER stepped into a Danish train station and spotted a bright LykkeLiga poster - all confidence, colour, and cool-factor - you've already had a glimpse of one of Denmark's most joyful social movements.

LykkeLiga (The Happy League) began not as a programme or a charity, but as a heartfelt act of parenting. Back in Aalborg, two families - the Espensens and the Niensens - were raising daughters with Down syndrome. When the girls became old enough to try handball, former national team player Rikke Nielsen dreamed of seeing her daughter on the court, just like any other child. The problem? No team existed that welcomed her.

One official even suggested bowling instead. "That's not very cool for someone who's played handball all her life," Mikael laughs.

So they made their own team.

They started with one training session at a local club and asked Mikael and his daughter to show up "just in case nobody else comes." Instead, 30 to 40 children arrived on day one. Families drove from 40 minutes away just to be part of something that didn't exist anywhere else: sports where the rules were simple - everyone is welcome, everyone is a teammate, everyone has fun.

A GROWING COMMUNITY OF JOY

From the start, the founders leaned into their advertising backgrounds. They designed professional jerseys, created team posters, wrote a team song, and built a world where every child with a disability could feel like a superstar. "Our mission was never really about handball," Mikael says. "It was about

creating happiness and making children feel like they're part of a team."

It worked. Fast.

Today, LykkeLiga includes more than 80 teams, 1600 players, and over 500 volunteer Head Coaches across Denmark. The branding is iconic. The movement has been featured on TV, in newspapers, and across social media. But what keeps it growing is not just the attention - it's the stories.

Like the boy with autism who spent almost a year sitting on the bench each Monday, simply watching. No pressure to join, no expectations, just a shirt, a seat, and a team waiting whenever he was ready. "At some point, the ball rolled his way," says Mikael. "He threw it back. Then he stood up. Then he joined. And suddenly he wasn't scared anymore — he was on the court."

Or the girl who, for three years, could only sit in the hallway outside LykkeLiga's tournament, overwhelmed by the noise. One year, she walked through the doors on her own. "It's all about timing," Mikael says. "We believe kids will join when they're ready, and we let them arrive exactly as they are."

That philosophy - no pressure, no prerequisites - is partly why international families fit right in. Many players don't speak Danish fluently. Some don't speak at all. Communication happens through smiles, movement, routine, and play. "Language doesn't matter here," he says. "Everyone can join."

Joining is simple: find your nearest team on LykkeLiga's website, reach out to the head coach, or just show up and try a session or two. After that, you pay a small fee directly to the local handball club - just like any other child in Denmark.

But LykkeLiga has grown far beyond the court. The team now runs family summer camps, community events, and youth programmes for players aged 18-25. There are teams in Germany, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and - in one of the organisation's favourite stories - South Korea, where a group of local volunteers built teams inspired entirely by what they saw in Denmark.

With growth comes new challenges. LykkeLiga is entirely independent as an organisation. About a third of its funding comes from the Danish government, another third from private companies, and the rest from grants - most of which must be reapplied for every few years. "We spend too much time worrying about financial security," Mikael admits. "What we really want is to keep building this community."

It's hard to exaggerate the shift LykkeLiga has created. Children now walk into grocery stores in their team shirts and get stopped for high-fives, small chats, and even autographs. They aren't approached as kids with disabilities, but as athletes.

When asked what he would say to international parents considering joining, Mikael smiles: "Join us, and you'll quickly realise that you've found your people."

And that is what makes LykkeLiga so special. It's not a disability organisation. It's not about diagnosis. It's a celebration - of childhood, community, and uncomplicated joy.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Whether you have a child with a disability or simply want to support one of Denmark's most joyful communities, LykkeLiga welcomes you. You can join, volunteer, coach, support financially, or help the organisation strengthen its long-term stability. You're welcome to contact Mikael at mikael@lykkeliga.dk or visit Lykke Liga's website - <https://lykkeliga.dk/>

ABOUT THE WRITER

Anna Pawlowicz is the Founder and CEO of HumanKind, a consultancy driving disability inclusion in workplaces and society. Inspired by her son's experience with disability and autism, she is passionate about building more inclusive communities.



CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND

As twinkling lights return, **Monika Pedersen** explores the magic of classroom traditions and the joy of giving that brightens December.



FREPIK

DECEMBER IS A magical time of year with shop windows adorned with seasonal sprigs, twinkling lights deck most shops, houses, and balconies, and major cities have Christmas markets where the sound of sausages sizzling and the aroma of gløgg fills the air, bringing with it a sense of enchantment. And in the classroom, there is endless chatter among students about the possible Christmas gift wish list they might create for Santa.

TRADITIONS

It is a time that lends itself to traditions, especially in a school setting. With the four weeks of Advent often starting on the last Sunday in November, a teacher hurries to devise an Advent calendar that young students can enjoy. These are not chocolate-based calendars like those sold in shops, but far more creative ones. Often, each class parent donates a gift, which is wrapped and hung on a string on a classroom wall along with all the other gifts, and a child pulls a number from a hat to allocate them a date. Each day, one child collects their packaged gift. This activity creates tremendous energy and excitement in a room, as the class awaits to see what is inside the wrapping. Another possibility is to have an advent 'nisser', as it is called in Denmark, which translates to an elf. The elf has numbered pockets, and inside each pocket is a special message with a much-loved activity, such as extra playtime or Play-Doh time, which the class can enjoy each day.

There is also a day on the calendar for the class to decorate their classroom, with craft activities such as stocking-making, reindeer cutouts, cotton-wool snowmen, and the like. The class then hang their creations to beautify the room and give it some festive cheer.

On the afternoon of December 5, younger classes place their wellies in the classroom, hoping to find them filled with goodies on the morning of December 6, for Saint Nicholas was a saint who bestowed gifts to those who were well behaved!

Another tradition from the Scandinavian countries is the festival celebrating St. Lucia Day, a saint from centuries ago who brought food to those in need and was sadly martyred for her benevolent actions. At school, the ceremony involves older students dressed in all white, holding candles, and parading through the corridors, singing a haunting yet beautiful song. The candles mark the fact that St. Lucia survived the flames that were meant to kill her, but sadly did not survive a fatal stabbing.

In addition to these special events, there is always a festive concert, whereby the music teacher has worked industriously with his/her classes to produce a number of festive songs that students happily present to their parents and evoke a sense of happiness in all those involved.

THINKING OF OTHERS

The festive period is a time when it is prudent to have children stop and think about those who are not so fortunate. This time of year is not merely about receiving but also about giving. It is a valuable learning experience for children to consider what they can do to improve others' lives. One way to do this is to hold a food drive for non-perishable items or unwanted toys and gifts, which can be donated to local charities that support those in need by distributing the donations. It can also start at home during high-baking season by making some delicious, sweet treats that can be sold at a school bake sale, with the proceeds donated to charity. Whatever the activity may be, the importance lies in the message and in having it embraced by the children.

THE FESTIVE BREAK

The term finally comes to an end, and the children leave excited for the last days before the 'great event'; however, over the preceding weeks, it is hoped their minds have absorbed the richness of experiences offered within an international community setting.



JILL WELLINGTON - FXABAY

ABOUT THE WRITER

Monika Pedersen is an international educator with extensive leadership experience across the UK, Germany, and Denmark. She brings deep expertise in international and Danish school systems, with a continued passion for teaching and learning.



DRIVING DENMARK'S DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

Mariano A. Davies highlights TDC's leadership in accelerating Denmark's digital future, blending cutting-edge networks, agile innovation, and a commitment to seamless connectivity.



FREEPIK

TDC GROUP TODAY consists of two main companies: TDC NET and Nuuday.

TDC NET delivers the best mobile network and the fastest fixed-line connections in Denmark – and represents Denmark's digital future with a roll-out of fibre and 5G.

Nuuday is the leading service provider of digital services within TV, broadband, networks, and telephony for private customers and businesses, and consists of nine strong brands: YouSee, Telmore, Hiper, eesy, Blockbuster, YouTv, TDC Erhverv, NetDesign, and Relatel.

TDC NET

TDC NET builds the digital infrastructure of the future so Denmark can remain at the forefront of development. They aim to provide the fastest fixed connections and the best mobile network, and to make it simple for everyone to use this network and remain well-connected.

As the largest and most experienced provider of digital infrastructure in Denmark, TDC NET delivers stable and future-proof connections to the Danish people.

They are responsible for maintaining the existing digital infrastructure while also investing in new technologies to expand and improve nationwide connections.

- They connect more than 1.5 million addresses with coaxial cable and fibre.
- They offer Denmark's best mobile network with nationwide 5G coverage.
- Their copper network reaches over 2.8 million addresses.

Danes are increasingly demanding more from the

digital infrastructure in terms of speed and coverage, and this demand is expected to continue to grow. Therefore, TDC NET is constantly working to expand this network across the country.

TDC NET is a connectivity provider of digital infrastructure that is open to all service providers. They build, own and operate the next generation of Denmark's digital infrastructure. Denmark holds a leading position in digitalisation across the EU, and

TDC NET plays an important role in enabling society's transition to a green and sustainable future.

THE BACK STORY

In 1882, industrial magnate and businessman C.F. Tietgen founded the Copenhagen Telephone Company to connect the very first telephones. This led to many more telephones throughout the country and several regional telecommunications companies, which later became Tele Denmark and then TDC Group, owning YouSee, Telmore, TDC Business and more.

In 2019, TDC Group initiated a historic split of the company to establish two independent companies. This division has now been finalised, and TDC Group has become two companies, each with their own core areas, which work towards a digital future.

NUUDAY

Nuuday takes the lead when it comes to developing the services that make life a little easier; they push the boundaries, and when needed, challenge the status quo. They deliver market-leading connectivity products and digital services to most of all Danish homes and businesses. Together, they make sense with technology and create digital services that truly

add value to their customers' everyday lives.

They want to be Denmark's best digital service provider for consumers and businesses by delivering exceptional experiences - that is the goal of all the brands in Nuuday. Together, they are on a mission to be among the best in Europe, to compete hard and fast in present markets and to raise the bar in every service they deliver.

As a result of the Danish Business Authority's market decision in the wholesale markets for broadband, Nuuday has given a commitment not to implement a price squeeze on TDC-owned infrastructure in the areas where TDC A/S has been designated as having SMP (significant market power).

Thus, price squeeze monitoring of selected flagship products is carried out on an ongoing basis. The selection of the flagship products is based on an inventory of the fastest-growing products measured by new sales. The flagship products are published one month before they enter into force.

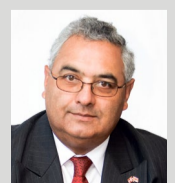
FLAGSHIP PRODUCTS

- **Copper** - As the fastest-growing copper broadband speed in the consumer market, Nuuday has selected a 50 Mbit speed.
- **Coax** - As the two fastest-growing coax broadband speeds in the consumer market, Nuuday has selected 200 Mbit and 1000 Mbit.
- **Fibre** - As the two fastest-growing fibre broadband speeds in the consumer market, Nuuday has selected 100 Mbit and 1000 Mbit.
- **Broadband** - As the fastest-growing, mass-produced broadband speed in the business market over the previous half year across technologies, Nuuday has selected 1.000 Mbit fibre.

TDC NET has more than 2.000 employees and generates a revenue of DKK 6,45B (2024). Nuuday has approx. 3.000 employees, who serve 2 million businesses and 3.9 million consumer customers, generating a revenue of DKK 14.6B (2024).

ABOUT THE WRITER

Mariano Anthony Davies, President & CEO of Oxford Business Services ApS, brings 40+ years of international executive experience. A British citizen in Denmark, he is a seasoned leader, advisor, and fluent English–Danish communicator.



NORDIC CALM

This season calls for slowing down - **Ophelia Wu** shares seven serene spas perfect for a year-end reset.

AS THE YEAR comes to an end, many of us are carrying more stress than we admit. It has been a complicated and heavy year for many people. These days, true luxury has very little to do with price tags. What feels genuinely indulgent is the freedom to switch off, to step away from noise, screens, pressure and the constant need to respond. A simple pause can be a powerful act of self-preservation.

A change of scene does wonders for the nervous system. Warm water, clean air, stillness and a soft view can quieten the mind far more quickly than any productivity trick. Imagine drifting between heat and cold, breathing in the scent of wood and essential oils, or sitting quietly in a robe with nothing expected of you. Even picturing it feels soothing. Actually doing it can feel like reclaiming a small piece of yourself.

The Nordic countries know this well. Their approach to wellness is calm, honest and rooted in nature. It is about warmth, space, simplicity and a gentle kind of presence. Below are seven exceptional Nordic spas that offer the perfect reset as the year draws to a close.

#1 ARCTIC BATH, HARADS, SWEDISH LAPLAND

If you are the type of person who prefers not to be found, who enjoys isolation and wants to be surrounded by nature with a clear view of the sky, Arctic Bath is one of the most striking options for you. Swedish Lapland is a region of mesmerising contrasts, where dramatic landscapes meet Arctic cultural heritage. Light and darkness, ice and warmth, silence and movement. These extremes create a setting that feels both grounding and otherworldly.

The spa sits as a circular structure on the Lule River, floating gently in summer and freezing into place during winter. From afar, it looks like a piece of sculpture resting on water and snow. Inside, everything revolves around contrast. Warm saunas lead into crisp Arctic air. Soft light glows against deep winter darkness. The central open-air plunge pool offers a moment of clarity before you step back into warmth. The silence here feels almost physical. Treatments draw on Arctic plants and minerals, and the slow, steady pace helps you reconnect with yourself. Arctic Bath is not just a spa but a reminder of how peaceful the world can feel when you step out of your everyday life.

#2 MARIENLYST STRANDHOTEL, HELSINGØR, DENMARK

Falling asleep to the sound of waves on a quiet night is one of the most luxurious experiences in modern life. Marienlyst brings that feeling into its spa world. The hotel sits directly on the coast, and the sea becomes part of the atmosphere here. Warm pools and saunas open up to the horizon, the air carries the scent of salt, and the entire place encourages a slow-



ARCTIC BATH- CREDIT: ANDERS BLOMQUIST

er, softer pace. Days here can be as lively or quiet as you want. There are daytime activities, excellent restaurants and bars, concerts and events, and corners of the spa where you can curl up and disappear for a while. The food is genuinely fresh and well-made, which is not something you can always say about coastal hotels. Marienlyst feels welcoming and easy to settle into. It is ideal when you want relaxation without feeling too far from people or comfort.

#3 ALSIK NORDIC SPA AND WELLNESS, SØNDERBORG, DENMARK

Alsik is one of those experiences that is difficult to describe, and that is exactly why you should try it. It is home to the Nordic 5, a 2.5-hour guided sensory journey through heat, cold, scent, taste and stillness. The ritual has been created and refined by the spa's own team, and many guests say afterwards that they have never tried anything quite like it.

What makes the Nordic five special is the guidance. Instead of wandering around steam rooms trying to figure out what to do next, you are welcomed by a spa guide who leads you through five chapters, each with its own mood and effect on the body and mind. The experience is inspired by the elements of earth, fire, water, stone and wood, and you smell, taste, listen and feel your way through the entire journey. It begins the moment the lift opens. Your guide greets you with a small sea buckthorn shot to wake up your senses. The pace slows, the outside

world falls away, and you move as a small group into warmth, gentle light and thoughtful spaces. Alsik is one of Denmark's largest spas, and the Nordic 5 uses that space beautifully. It is grounding and surprisingly emotional, and it stays with you long after you leave.

#4 HAGAstrand, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Hagastrand is Sweden's newest social wellness destination, set beside the tranquil waters of Brunnsviken. From the moment you enter, the architecture invites you to slow down. Soft curves, natural materials and gentle colours create spaces that feel calm and sensory without being dramatic. It is a place where Nordic traditions seamlessly meet modern ideas. Hagastrand calls itself a social wellness environment. Instead of expecting silence, it welcomes connection, creativity and shared experience. You might walk past a peaceful pool one moment and find a small performance or sound experience unfolding the next. Everything from quiet thermal rituals to circus acts and underwater music concerts can appear here. The atmosphere is warm and alive without ever feeling overwhelming. It is ideal if you enjoy the comfort of a spa but also like a gentle pulse of energy around you.

#5 THE WELL, OSLO REGION, NORWAY

The Well is Norway's largest spa and one of the most diverse in the Nordics. There are saunas, pools, steam

2. MARIENLYST STRANDHOTEL, CREDIT: MARIENLYST.DK 3. ALSIK SPA, CREDIT: ALSIK SPA 4. HAGASTRAND, CREDIT: HAGASTRAND 5. TROPICAL SPA, THE WELL, CREDIT: THE WELL 6. GLASS RESORT/NORTHERN LIGHTS 7. SKY LAGOON, CREDIT: SKYLAGOON.COM



rooms and quiet spaces in every direction, each designed to help your body soften and your mind settle. You can spend hours here without ever feeling rushed. The rituals are what set The Well apart. The Fullmoon Ritual takes place once a month in the Forest Sauna is a slow, atmospheric heat experience designed to help you reconnect with yourself. Aufguss sessions are led by skilled sauna masters who use essential oils, ice balls and towel movements to circulate heat and scent through the room. It can feel surprisingly emotional. For something slower, the Hammam and Rhassoul rituals use steam, warmth and mineral clay to cleanse and calm the body. The Well is a place where you can settle into warmth and stillness at your own pace.

#6 GLASS RESORT, ROVANIEMI, FINNISH LAPLAND

Rovaniemi is known as the home of Santa Claus, but it also has a quieter side that most people miss. Not far from the Santa Claus Village lies one of Lapland's most peaceful retreats, surrounded by forest, snow and a soft kind of Arctic light. Glass Resort is a place where wellness is something you feel rather than schedule. The calm comes from the landscape, the warmth of the sauna and the deep silence that settles over everything. Each suite has its own private sauna and outdoor hot-spring spa, making your experience personal and unforgettable. You can step into the sauna to ease your body, then move into the

warm water outside where the heat rises into the cool air.

The quiet is uninterrupted, and the pace slows down. Even the food follows the same philosophy. Ingredients come from the land around you, gathered from nearby forests, lakes and small producers. The dishes are simple and seasonal, prepared with care and intention. The suites blend Nordic craftsmanship with Arctic heritage. Glass walls and ceilings frame the landscape, while warm woods and soft lighting create a cocoon-like space. Watching snowfall from bed or soaking under the open sky feels almost unreal. It is a sanctuary for anyone seeking peace, solitude and a genuine connection with nature.

#7 SKY LAGOON, KÓPAVOGUR, ICELAND

Sky Lagoon feels like stepping into Iceland itself. Geothermal-heated water, with views open to the Atlantic, carries a sense of raw, elemental calm. The lagoon is warm, soft and spacious, and the contrast with the cool air above it creates a feeling that is both energising and soothing.

While this is not a hotel stay, it truly is a dreamy escape into the wild for a day. The highlight here is the Skjól ritual. It is a seven-step journey rooted in Icelandic bathing culture. You begin in the lagoon, move into a cold plunge, enter a large sauna with a panoramic ocean view, pass into a cool mist corridor, apply a mineral scrub, settle into a steam bath

and finish with a small glass of crowberry elixir called Saft. The drink is made from berries picked in the Westfjords and tastes clean, tart and grounding. According to its maker, you taste the Icelandic mountainside in one sip. Sky Lagoon is perfect if you want a direct connection to nature and a reminder of what absolute tranquillity feels like. It is honest, simple and deeply restorative.

The Nordics have a way of offering peace without pretence. Whether you prefer icy lakes, geothermal heat, floating architecture or cocoon-like privacy in the forest, these spas give you a chance to pause before the new year begins or start the new year with a calm and peaceful reset. They are reminders that rest is not a luxury but a necessity, and that sometimes the most meaningful thing you can do is simply slow down and unplug.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Ophelia Wu is a Copenhagen-based fashion consultant, journalist, with a career spanning Hong Kong, London, and beyond. She brings her passion for fashion, beauty, and interiors to brands worldwide while embracing the Scandinavian lifestyle.



12 DAYS OF FITNESS MYTHS

This month, **Alexandra Beck** cuts through the seasonal noise to debunk the most common fitness myths.



WAL_172619 - PIXABAY

EVERY DECEMBER, SOCIAL media fills with “12 days of” lists – cookies, cocktails, kindness challenges. So let’s unwrap something that won’t leave you with regret in January: the 12 days of fitness myths.

After almost 6 years of training people through cold Danish winters, I’ve heard just about every excuse and misunderstanding out there. These are the ones I’d most like to retire before the New Year.

DAY 1: “I’LL START AFTER CHRISTMAS.”

Your body doesn’t know it’s December. Movement isn’t punishment for overeating; it’s maintenance for feeling good. Even 10 minutes a day keeps you connected to your body and helps you avoid that dreadful January “restart.”

DAY 2: “NO PAIN, NO GAIN.”

Soreness doesn’t equal success. Progress should challenge you, not cripple you. If you can’t sit down or lift your arms for three days, you’ve gone too far. The real “gain” is consistent effort over time – not survival of the sorest.

DAY 3: “CARDIO IS THE BEST WAY TO LOSE FAT.”

Cardio burns calories while you’re doing it. Muscle burns calories all day, even when you’re on the sofa. Strength training is your metabolic investment account, paying dividends for years.

DAY 4: “WEIGHTS MAKE WOMEN BULKY.”

Unless you’re secretly injecting testosterone and eating six chickens a day, you’ll be fine. Strength training gives shape, tone, and confidence. The so-called “bulk” is usually just new muscle, revealing where the old myth lived.

DAY 5: “I CAN SPOT-REDUCE FAT.”

You can’t crunch your way to abs or tricep-dip your way out of bingo wings. Fat loss happens systemically, not locally. But you can strengthen and define those areas so that when fat is reduced overall, you see the results.

DAY 6: “I NEED TO TRAIN EVERY DAY.”

Rest is a training day. It’s when the repair, rebuilding, and hormonal reset happen. Overtraining doesn’t make you fitter; it makes you tired and cranky. Two or three quality strength sessions and some active recovery go further than daily burnout.

DAY 7: “IF I SKIP A WEEK, I’LL LOSE ALL MY PROGRESS.”

Not true. Strength is loyal. Take a week off and your body remembers. Take a month off, and it forgives if you come back smart. What you do most of the time matters far more than what you do occasionally.

DAY 8: “MEN AND WOMEN SHOULD TRAIN DIFFERENTLY.”

Muscles don’t know gender; they know stimulus. Both men and women benefit from squats, presses, and pull-ups. The difference lies in life stages – pregnancy, menopause, and andropause – which require adjustments in volume and recovery, not entirely different exercises.

DAY 9: “I’M TOO OLD TO START.”

My favourite myth to crush. I’ve seen people in their 60s and 70s start lifting and feel stronger than they did decades earlier. Strength, balance, and energy can all be rebuilt. Movement is the ultimate anti-ageing serum, and it’s free.

DAY 10: “IF I EAT CLEAN, I DON’T NEED TO WATCH CALORIES.”

Avocado toast still has calories. “Clean” foods can be high in fat or carbs. Awareness beats restriction. If you track occasionally, you’ll learn portion sizes and balance. And yes, you can still have wine and dessert – just not both every night.

DAY 11: “SWEATING MEANS IT’S WORKING.”

Sweat cools your body; it doesn’t measure effort. You can sweat in a sauna without getting fitter. The hardest work often looks calm – like controlled lifting, slow eccentric squats, or holding a plank that makes your inner voice swear quietly.

DAY 12: “I NEED MOTIVATION TO WORK OUT.”

Motivation gets you started; discipline keeps you going. You don’t brush your teeth because you’re inspired – you do it because it’s hygiene. Think of movement as body hygiene. Some days it’s fun, other days it’s routine, but it always pays off.

THE WRAP-UP

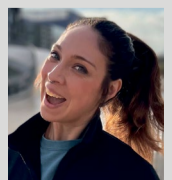
If you recognise yourself in any of these myths, you’re in good company. The fitness world thrives on extremes – detox teas, miracle transformations, endless “before and after” photos – but the truth is much simpler. Move often, lift heavy (for you), eat with awareness, rest with intention, and start again.

The holidays are a perfect time to reframe your goals. Instead of aiming for perfection, aim for maintenance. Instead of guilt, aim for awareness. Instead of waiting until January, start with one small, positive action today.

Believe me, the best gift you can give yourself isn’t under the tree – it’s the one that keeps you feeling strong, mobile, and ready for life all year long.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Alexandra Beck is a Swiss/Brit personal trainer and nutrition coach in Copenhagen, helping people of all ages find fun and consistency in fitness. A former communications professional, she now brings energy, and community magic to every workout.



WHERE THE PAST INSPIRES THE PRESENT

Jess Hearne reveals Copenhagen's architectural ode to creativity: a museum where humanity meets itself.



SOFTCODEX PIXABAY

FOR THOUSANDS OF years, long before cities rose or languages developed, art has captivated and united humanity. Some of the earliest documented forms of self-expression were carved figures and painted wall stories. Glyptoteket, a sanctuary of artistic delight in the heart of the capital that blends past and present, offers visitors a chance to immerse themselves in creativity and reconnect with what really matters.

AN ARCHITECTURALLY MAGNIFICENT SETTING

Glyptoteket began with the philanthropy of Carl Jacobsen, who is famed for transforming the Carlsberg brewery into the iconic brand it is today. Despite being a shrewd and visionary businessman, his real passion was creativity, believing that art enriched people's lives and should therefore be accessible to everyone.

An enthusiastic collector, Jacobsen accumulated an impressive array of pieces from all corners of the globe. His main passions lay in the art of Ancient Greece and antiquity, but he also had an interest in works from France and Denmark. By 1885, his private villa was officially open to the public, and the collection had expanded to 19 galleries. Despite footing the bill for multiple expansions of the original building, it became clear that his ever-growing collection needed a new home.

On 8th March 1888, Jacobsen donated his beloved treasures to the Danish State and the City of Copenhagen, on the condition that they be placed in a suitable new location easily accessible to the gen-

eral public. Despite hoping for a spot in the newly-built Rådhusplads, Jacobsen accepted the proposed spot on the western ramparts of the city, where it still stands to this day. Inspired by Ludwig I's Glyptothek in Munich, Jacobsen chose a similar name for his own museum, combining the Greek words glyptos (carving or sculpting) and theke (a place where something is collected or displayed). [His vision](#) was to build a temple of beauty in which art could speak to everyone in an architecturally magnificent setting.

ART WITHIN ART ITSELF

The building we see today is a piece of art in itself. Inspired by the architecture of the Venetian Renaissance, Vilhelm Dahlerup's 1897 façade and Winter Garden featured vaulted spaces, a domed glass conservatory and Italian ornament. An extension and rework of the garden were designed and inaugurated by Hack Kampmann in 1906, and, more recently, Henning Larsen Architects added a light-filled contemporary wing marrying the old and the new.

Despite having a deep appreciation of art in all its forms, Jacobsen was particularly passionate about sculpture, believing three-dimensional pieces were the easiest for the average person to relate to. He bought his first classical piece, the Rayet Head, in 1879 and soon added a Roman sarcophagus, some Palmyrene portrait busts, various French statues, and copies of Roman bronze sculptures discovered in the ruins of Pompeii. Jacobsen's array of sculpture grew to new heights in 1887, when he met the German archaeologist Wolfgang Helbig. For the next 25

“ART LIFTS US, CONNECTS US AND REMINDS US THAT CREATIVITY HAS SHAPED OUR SOCIETIES AS MUCH AS ANY INVENTION OR DISCOVERY EVER HAS.”

years, Helbig served as an on-site agent for Jacobsen in Rome, where he worked tirelessly to secure the vast expanse of Roman antiquities still on display in Glyptoteket's galleries.

Jacobsen was also an admirer of contemporary French art, whose works he saw at the annual exhibitions in Paris. The first French work, *La Musique* by E. Delaplanche, was added to his collection in 1878, and he acquired a couple of pieces each year thereafter. He was a regular buyer at the Salon de Paris. He commissioned several works directly from his favourite French contemporary artists, including Antonin Mercié's stunning centrepiece in the museum's Winter Garden, *Gloria Victis*.

Today, Glyptoteket houses over 10,000 works of art. Its collections span Greek, Roman, Etruscan, Egyptian and Near Eastern antiquities, major French Impressionist and sculptural works and Danish Golden Age painting and sculpture. There is also an extensive array of European art from Neoclassicism to Modernism, including pieces by Rodin, Degas, Gauguin, Picasso, Miró and Giacometti, as well as notable modern paintings and diverse archaeological treasures.

Ultimately, art reminds us that our sentiments have survived far longer than our achievements; people of the past felt joy, loss, and curiosity just as we do today. Humanity can often feel scattered and divided, yet art lifts us, connects us and reminds us that creativity has shaped our societies as much as any invention or discovery ever has.

To plan your visit, go to <https://glyptoteket.com/>

ABOUT THE WRITER

Jess Hearne is an Irish Content & Communications Specialist based in Copenhagen. With a background in history and socio-political studies, she works with clients across many areas, while pursuing passion projects in feminist history and film psychology.



THE POWER OF ONE YOUNG VOICE

Ali Lewis talks to Srishti Sabarinath on being a young international activist, how books can change the world and raising awareness through social media.

WHEN THE WORLD feels bleak, speak to a young person. I meet Srishti Sabarinath at the end of a long, slightly frustrating work day and within a few minutes, I feel completely uplifted. She made my day, I tell her. She laughs. "I always love yapping about things to someone, so thank you!" she replies. "You made my day!"

"Yapping" is a total understatement for what Srishti does. The 13-year-old, who moved to Copenhagen from India at 5, can list activist, cultural ambassador, blogger, reporter, and more on her CV. She is a young ambassador for Copenhagen Libraries, a member of the Copenhagen Youth Council, and she promotes STEM activities for young people. She still finds time to blog about reading and to raise awareness of issues and organisations on her Instagram and TikTok accounts. She is an influencer, in the best possible way, at a time when concerns about young people's mental health, social media use, low levels of reading and political engagement, and immigration issues fill the Danish news.

It all started with books. "My book blog was the beginning of all the good things in my life and really created who I am today," Srishti says. Newly arrived in Denmark from Kerala in India, enrolled in a Danish public school with no other international students, the public library next door was a haven for her. "My own experience is that libraries play such an important role in integration, especially now the government's approach is changing," she says. The young Srishti devoured books, learning Danish along the way. Eventually, her parents suggested she start a blog. "I wanted to shout out to the world how good these books were, and with the blog, I finally had someone to yap to all the time about that!" she laughs.

MY GOAL IS TO MAKE SURE KIDS KNOW READING IS SUPER FUN

"What I'm trying to show through my blog is that reading is actually fun. Kids think that reading is just homework from teachers or parents," Srishti points out. "My goal is to make sure kids know reading is super fun. It's like watching a movie, but you imagine it yourself, which is better than staring at a screen." She hates it, she says, when parents say to their children to read for 20 minutes a day: "It makes it seem like homework and it's not! You're supposed to read for fun!"

Copenhagen Libraries were with Srishti "from the start. They were my second follower," she tells me. She thinks they liked that her reviews were "so authentic, just what a nine-year-old had written, with



SABARINATH K

all the spelling errors and in bad Danish!"

"We love collaborating with Srishti at Copenhagen Libraries," says Sigrid Brix, children's librarian. "She reads a lot, and she talks about books in a way that makes others want to read too. She has such a great energy that shines through the screen, and she is truly inspiring."

Srishti recalls a message she got from the mother of an 8-year-old girl: "Her mom wrote to me that she loved reading, and she was so happy I was trying to

make reading a normal thing that's not boring. She saw me as some kind of role model! I was so happy!"

SHE HAS SUCH GREAT ENERGY THAT SHINES THROUGH THE SCREEN, AND SHE IS TRULY INSPIRING

Books might be her first love - Srishti is much in demand these days from publishers, authors and book prize committees - but her passions are much broader. She is a member of Copenhagen's youth coun-



SABARINATH K

cil, particularly focused on increasing awareness of mental health support for young people and of the hidden racism that can endure in Denmark. “I want to show Danish people how hard it can be,” she says. “I joined the Copenhagen Youth Council to try to do something about hidden racism. Sometimes people at school are racist to me without even realising it, like telling racist jokes they heard online. It makes me really sad, and I want to spread awareness about that and make things better.”

Srishti’s social media accounts, which her parents oversee, have given her another platform to reach young people around the world and share her Indian culture. “People still think Indian is a language, and I’m like: ‘There are 23 different languages in India, and none of them are called Indian!’ Srishti laughs. ‘People still think we worship cows! I try to spread awareness of Indian culture so more people learn about the different festivals and different parts of the country.’”

WHEN I SEE AN ORGANISATION THAT PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT, I HAVE TO TELL THEM

Srishti also promotes organisations working to make internationals’ lives better here: “When I see an organisation that people should know more about, I have to tell them because it’s so important,” she says. She recently featured an interview with LGBT Asylum, a Copenhagen-based NGO supporting LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees, on her social media. She has also been very busy speaking about the upcoming elections and interviewing local politicians on Copenhagen youth audio platform Hulgennem. Srishti thinks she has interviewed around 50 people now, including multiple authors and the Danish Minister for Culture. She still gets nervous and worried she’ll mess up. “Sometimes I do, but I just get back up and carry on,” she says. Her dad has been a huge encouragement to her: “He will always say, ‘You can do this!’ And I’m so happy he does that.”

Srishti creates videos in English and Danish to reach broader audiences. She still feels like an international, she says, even though she has lived here since she was a small child. “When I go to India, I feel like I’m a Dane there, and I feel like an Indian here. I know the history of India, but I’ve never lived there and experienced the culture. I don’t really know what I am, but right now I would say because I know so much Danish culture, I’m ‘culturally’ Danish or something like that,” she says.

She is also an ambassador for STEM, promoting the organisation Coding Pirates and the recent Ada Lovelace Day, an international event celebrating the



SABARINATH K

woman who was the first programmer and giving a space for girls to share their enjoyment of coding. “Girls often think coding is a boyish thing and they don’t want to join,” Srishti says. “Someone actually didn’t believe me when I said the world’s first programmer was a girl! They said, Nah, it has to be a boy! I want to challenge these misconceptions.”

I JUST WANT TO FIGHT FOR WHAT’S RIGHT

Entering politics would seem like Srishti’s natural career, but she says that’s not her main passion. “I just want to make Denmark a better place for internationals,” she says. “I just want to fight for what’s right.”

Srishti has encouraging words for any young people around her age struggling with moving to a new country: “I struggled academically and socially at first because I couldn’t speak Danish well, and I didn’t understand Danish culture yet. Now I have some really good friends. I can speak Danish fluently: I often think in Danish instead of English! I don’t know which language I’m better at now! I do understand the culture. My story has a happy ending! It’s going to get better, I swear!”

So what’s next for the young woman who is perhaps Denmark’s youngest ethical influencer? “There

are still things I wouldn’t dare to do, but I’ll get there soon,” she says. Wherever Srishti is, she’ll inevitably have a book in her hand, ready to yap about it to anyone who will listen. “If you mention free books, she will do anything!” Srishti’s dad laughs, and she agrees.

You can follow Srishti on:

[Instagram](#)
[Srishti’s book blog](#)
[TikTok](#)
[Coding Pirates](#)

ABOUT THE WRITER

Ali Lewis is the reporting lead at Last Week in Denmark, a freelance writer, and content creator with a focus on music, feminism, and LGBTQI+ history. Originally from Scotland, she moved to Billund in 2024 with her family after a career in education.



SMALL TALK WITH DANES

Josephine Basthof guides us through the unspoken rules of Danish silence - where small talk is rare, privacy is sacred, and comfort is found in quiet.

GROWING UP IN Denmark, I never noticed how quiet we are. Silence just felt normal, like background noise. It wasn't until I travelled to cities such as New York or London that I realised how unusual this is. There, public spaces buzzed with chatter. Strangers talked in shops, on the subway, in cafés, voices filling every gap.

To me, all this noise felt overwhelming. I recall feeling uneasy during my first interactions with strangers and wondering: Why are they talking to me? Do they want something? In Denmark, you can move through your entire day without speaking to anyone outside your close circle.

WHAT IS SMALL TALK, REALLY? AND WHY DON'T WE DO IT?

Small talk is a social ritual. In many countries, it's a polite way to create ease, friendliness and a foundation for deeper conversations.

It's the casual "How are you?" in the U.S. or "Tudo bem?" in Brazil, phrases you throw out to almost anyone, not because you expect a deep answer, but because it creates bridges between people that don't know each other. It's the light comments about the weather, the bus being late, or how nice someone's shoes look. It doesn't really matter what you say - what matters is that you say something.

But in Denmark, those spaces are usually filled with silence. Try standing at a bus stop, and you'll see ten people quietly staring at their phones, pretending not to notice each other. Step into an elevator, and the only sound you'll hear is the awkward cough of someone wishing the ride was faster. In a Netto queue, the only words exchanged are between you and the cashier, and even then, it's short, efficient and practical.

The Danish language doesn't even have a casual equivalent of "How are you?" If someone suddenly asks "Hvordan har du det?" out of nowhere, most Danes freeze. Do I answer honestly? Do I say just "fine"?

The unspoken rule seems to be: if we don't know each other, we don't talk. And if we do talk, it's because something unusual has happened, such as the bus breaking down or the fire alarm going off.

ARE DANES COLD PEOPLE?

Scandinavians are often painted as cold and anti-social. It's tempting to say that Danes are just unfriendly, but that's not the whole picture. Here, silence isn't about dislike - it's more about comfort. In



reality, Danes are just masters of comfortable silence.

Still, I sometimes feel we're missing something, that easy, effortless warmth you usually find further south - those brief, joyful moments with strangers that can brighten a day and make a city feel alive.

Being with my Brazilian partner has shown me how different it can be. In his world, people are open, generous, and quick to spark conversation. They reach out without hesitation, share affection freely, and wide, lively social circles hold their lives together.

Denmark is the opposite. Here, closeness takes time. We guard ourselves carefully, and when we fi-

nally let people in, it's usually just a handful. Our social circles are small, and our warmth is quiet, hidden behind layers of trust that take a long time to build.

I admire his world of easy connections, and sometimes I wish we had more of that here. When we travel and encounter other Danes, he assumes I'll naturally talk to them - after all, we share a language, a culture, and a homeland. To him, it feels obvious. But to me, it feels unnatural. My instincts tell me to keep my distance. Is it shyness? Or simply the way I was raised, to leave strangers alone, because I assume they want their space, just as I want mine?

CREDIT: ILLUSTRATIONX



CREDIT: DIRK VAN STRALEN

At the same time, I can't deny the comfort I feel in the Danish way. I like the depth of my few close friendships, the safety of knowing I can always trust the people I let in. I don't have to perform for a crowd - I can simply lean on the few who matter most.

WHERE DOES THIS SILENCE COME FROM?

Several factors shape our quiet nature, and they run deeper than rudeness or shyness.

First, there's privacy. In Denmark, respecting personal space is essential. Approaching a stranger can feel intrusive. Silence is our way of giving people room to be themselves. What if they don't want to talk? What if they're anxious, stressed, or in a bad mood? There's so much we don't know about someone, so it feels safer to leave them alone and protect their space, just as we expect ours to be respected.

Then there's the infamous janteloven, the cultural code whispering, "Don't think you're special." Talking to strangers about yourself can feel like showing off or drawing attention to yourself in a way that's considered inappropriate. Better to just stay quiet and blend in.

The structure of Danish society also plays a role. In countries where people rely heavily on networks for survival, small talk is essential for building trust and securing help. In Denmark, the welfare state has addressed much of that. You don't need to charm or befriend the nurse to receive good care. Strangers aren't potential allies - they're just other people quietly going about their lives.

And finally, the Nordic climate cannot be ignored. Long, dark winters and endless rain don't exactly encourage cheerful chatter. Practical, minimal communication becomes habitual as people simply want to get home, close the door, and escape the cold.

ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS?

Of course. Danes aren't monks sworn to silence. The "rules of quiet" shift depending on context.

At work, it's expected to greet everyone you pass with a cheerful "god morgen", even to those you barely know. Friday bars or parties are also a whole different story. Add alcohol, and Danes suddenly rediscover their voices and quiet people transform into chatty extroverts.

Having a dog also gives you a free pass to chat with other people. The same in the playground - having children will often lead to conversation with other parents. Suddenly, silence gives way to questions about ages, schools, or dog breeds.

Location matters too. In the small town where I grew up, chatting with neigh-

bours felt normal. In Copenhagen, it's the opposite. In eight years of living there, I've never spoken to a neighbour in my building.

HOW INTERNATIONALS FEEL ABOUT IT

For newcomers, Denmark can feel cold. A friendly hello to a neighbour might be met with a closed door. A smile may go unanswered. What feels natural elsewhere may be experienced here as crossing an invisible boundary, and the absence of response can feel like rejection.

But silence here isn't hostility, it's neutrality. Ignoring someone in public is, strangely enough, a form of respect. We're giving you your space, just as we expect you to give us ours.

Many internationals eventually discover that once you're invited into a Dane's circle, the silence melts. Danes become warm and talkative. But breaking through that first layer can feel impossible without understanding that small talk simply isn't the entry ticket that it might be elsewhere.

SO, SHOULD DANES LEARN SMALL TALK?

Sometimes I think so. Small talk can be a simple way to connect. I admire cultures where a stranger's comment can lift your whole day. When I travel, I enjoy it, even if I don't always know how to respond.

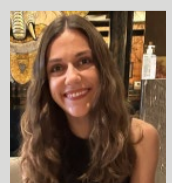
But at the same time, there's something I truly value about the Danish way. The quiet, the relief of not needing to fill every silence. The freedom of existing side by side with strangers without obligation. Moving through your life in your own world, in your own thoughts, without anyone demanding a piece of you. I think there's a lot of comfort in that.

Over the years, I've come to see it as a kind of honesty. In Denmark, if someone speaks to you, it's because they genuinely want to, not out of habit or obligation. And maybe there's something quietly beautiful about that too. After all, that's what is so amazing about this world that we all have our differences.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Josephine Basthof is from Denmark and based in Copenhagen.

Internationalism shapes her life - through her partner, her work in international relations, and her academic background in international studies. She's passionate about literature, culture, and societal issues, and loves exploring these topics around the world.



BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Julia Jones responds to an international's fears about regret, loneliness, and the challenge of building community in Denmark.

IN DEAR JULIA, psychologist Julia Jones answers readers' questions about life between cultures, exploring what it takes to build meaning and connection as an international in Denmark while staying true to yourself. You can submit a question [anonymously](#) here or learn more about [Jaywalk](#), Julia's therapy practice for internationals. Questions are quoted as written, in full or in part.

DEAR JULIA...

I moved to Denmark with my wife 7 years ago, and we now live here with our 3-year-old son. I have been feeling quite isolated here, and this feeling has been growing over time as my ties to my homeland gradually weaken.

Being away has taken its toll, and talking only on special occasions, or when we're together, isn't enough to grow or maintain the closeness I once had with family and friends. We are doing our best to ensure our son has his own network of friends, since we might not be able to provide it organically. But I myself feel distanced from the people abroad as much as from the people I know here, who I don't consider friends. This is one issue.

The other is that I keep reflecting on whether, 10-15 years from now, I will think I made the right decision to stay here, while also being sure that deciding to go back might be regretted.

Anyway, life as an emigrant is not easy, and I really don't know what to do.

Thank you.

Fighting not to fit

DEAR FIGHTING NOT TO FIT...

Thank you for sharing your dilemma with me. I can relate to your pain about feeling distanced from both the people in your home country and those here. Your letter touches on something deeply seated in all of us - our need to feel connected to others.

Psychology defines loneliness as the negative feelings that arise when our relationships are not what we desire them to be, either in number or closeness. Faced with having exactly this problem, your mind does what it's evolved to do: it tries to find a solution. It does that by showing you pictures of a lonely future in Denmark and pictures of the past in your country of origin. You are wondering if Denmark will fall short in providing you with the warmth and connections that filled your past. And yet, you know that leaving Denmark and moving back would come with its own set of sacrifices.

You are not alone in feeling this way. I have heard many stories of internationals feeling trapped in Denmark, in one way or another. Career and social



JON TYSON - UNSPLASH



FREEMK

life are common areas where reality has fallen short of expectations. And yet, benefits in other areas of life make many wonder whether they must accept their situations to hold on to them.

But let us come back to your specific situation. If the air in front of you began to shimmer and, in a puff of smoke, your 80-year-old self appeared from the future to give you advice, what do you think they would say? Your older self has lived the years you are worried about and knows how the story ends. I wouldn't be surprised if they thanked you for being honest about how you feel, because it's always the first step. I invite you to do this exercise in a quiet spot, maybe with a notebook to jot down your thoughts. Have a conversation with your wise self. Maybe you already know the answers you are looking for.

What I hear in your letter is a shift in priorities. When you first moved, your choices were guided by specific values and goals. You could focus on your career and start a family - those made sense at the time. But seven years later, something else is stirring. The values that served you in achieving what you have built over the past seven years fall short in creating a full and meaningful life across all areas of life.

Meanwhile, people back home have gone on with their lives. They are not who they were when they were part of your everyday world, and neither are you. When we moved abroad, we chose one version of life and said goodbye to another. The old has gone. We cannot simply slot ourselves back into that life, however tempting it feels on lonely days.

You're right in intuiting that it's time to make a decision. But I would challenge the notion that it's a decision whether to stay in Denmark. I think it's the decision to either accept your social isolation or start behaving in ways that help you build more and closer relationships.

We can cultivate skills to handle negative thoughts and feelings related to social isolation more effectively. This might be necessary if we cannot, or do not want to, make space for prioritising building relationships. However, if you are able and want to focus on building deeper, more meaningful relationships in your life, this is possible in Denmark as well.

Denmark has a reputation for being a country

where it's difficult for internationals to make friends. Partly this is cultural. Danes rarely bring people they meet in public spaces into their private lives. It's like an invisible barrier. They value a few close, private, and long-lasting friendships over a wider network of more recent, friendly connections.

However, nearly a million people in Denmark have a heritage other than Danish; they were born abroad or have parents who were. So, even if Danes are hard to befriend, the adage that their closedness to new connections lies at the heart of internationals' social isolation can only be part of the story.

There may be other reasons. For example, many internationals come to Denmark during their late

“VALUES MUST BE PUT INTO ACTION. THE FIRST STEP IS TO MAKE SPACE FOR YOUR NEW BEHAVIOURAL GUIDELINES IN YOUR LIFE. TO ALLOCATE TIME TO MAKING FRIENDS.”

20s, 30s, and 40s, when everyone is busy with work and family. It's simply not a life stage that lends itself to making friends easily.

However, it is essential to reflect on the outer context of an inner wish to feel more connected. But what might be even more important to understand is our individual inner context: our thoughts, feelings, experiences, memories, attachment styles, and beliefs we hold about ourselves, others, and the world. They will shape our ability to be open to making new connections. Making friends anywhere, at any age, requires letting our guard down, telling people we want to connect, being vulnerable, and risking rejection. We need to give people the benefit of the doubt and see them in a good light if we want them to return the favour.

In my opinion, your task is less about deciding whether to pull up the stakes and move to greener pastures of friendship. I believe your task is to make a conscious decision about how you want to behave in the future, one that can help you break out of the

bubble of isolation.

In my work, I call the behavioural guidelines we choose to follow to help us create a meaningful life 'values'. These behavioural guidelines are about your outward behaviour, but also about how you want to handle your doubts, judgments, and other inner experiences that hold you back from building connections.

To work, values must be put into action. The first step is to make space for your new behavioural guidelines in your life. To allocate time to making friends. The second step is to deliberate on how you want to open up to connections. The trick is to meet people through something that already matters to you. When you show up for something you enjoy or believe in, you naturally find others who care about the same things. That is where connection grows.

As a final word, I want you to know this. If, after reflecting on how you want to live, you realise that going back truly fits who you are now, then that is valid too. The goal is not to prove that staying was right. It is to live a life that feels coherent and meaningful.

Kierkegaard wrote that choice is both our freedom and our burden. To choose one life always means giving up another. We long for certainty, but we never get it. What we do get is the chance to decide with awareness, to say, 'this is the life I will live, even without guarantees'.

Wherever you choose to be, the work starts now: to build a life that your eighty-year-old self would look at with warmth and say, 'yes, that was worth it.' And for that, it probably matters less where you live than how you live.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Julia Jones is a psychologist supporting young people and adults navigating cross-cultural life. Through Jaywalk, she offers grounded, evidence-based therapy for internationals, informed by her own experience living across countries and cultures.



DENMARK'S VIKING PAST

Sudaay Tat Haznedar explores the origins and legacy of Denmark's Viking ring fortresses, revealing how these ancient structures continue to shape the nation's historical identity.



AGGERSBORG / CREDIT: MUSLINGEBYEN.DK

IF IT IS your first time, you are in the right place. This article covers the five forts to visit and their history. Before we start, let's dive into a bit of background on Viking Ring Fortresses in Denmark.

As their name suggests, these fortresses are circular and share similarities. Mostly, they were built between 970-980 CE, and their placement was usually strategic, such as near important land or sea routes or places used for defence. As far as is known, the purpose was to consolidate power for the Danish king, defend the realm, control trade routes, and demonstrate the new state's formation.

Today, you can see five key ring-fortresses in Denmark, and they are included in the UNESCO World Heritage list (2023) as "Viking-Age Ring Fortresses".

THE TOP 5 VIKING FORTS TO VISIT

1. Trelleborg (Slagelse, Zealand)

Trelleborg is one of Denmark's most well-preserved ring fortresses, and it likely served as a royal stronghold. It was excavated between 1934 and 1942, revealing 31 houses and many artefacts. Its strategic position is also critical, as it is between rivers and located in Zealand in the Tude Valley.

In summer, there are usually events such as the Viking Festival, and within the fort, you'll also find a reconstructed Viking village. If you are planning to start your trip, it is easy to reach by car, or you may need to take public transport from Slagelse. You will

**"THE VIKING FORTS ARE AN
ESSENTIAL PART OF DANISH
HISTORY. IT IS THE TIME WHEN
THE COUNTRY TRANSFORMED
INTO A UNIFIED KINGDOM."**

see the best-preserved forts and have an immersive experience.

Trelleborg is also the site of legend and myth. They say during the misty summer mornings, you might see the shadowy outlines of Viking warriors training on the ramparts of the fort. People say there are some ghosts from Harald Blåtand's army, but who knows? Why don't you give it a try? You can see if it is a legend or real.

2. Fyrkat (Hobro, Jutland)

Fyrkat had sixteen large longhouses arranged in four quadrants. It was excavated between 1950 and 1958 by C.G. Schultz. You can see some unique things there; for example, there is a grave called "seeress's," which is an unusual female burial with grave goods. She was buried with some interesting items, including herbs and jewellery. This shows she might have held a decisive spiritual role. Some historians even say she might have been a ritual priestess, connecting the human world with the Norse gods.

It is also less crowded than some other Sjælland sites and perfect for a quieter visit. You can also gain insights into everyday Viking-Age life beyond the fort structure, and it is an ideal place to combine history with a nature walk.

3. Aggersborg (Limfjord, Northern Jutland)

Aggersborg is one of the largest Danish ring fortresses. Harald Blåtand built it in the late 970s. The structure is a circular rampart about 9 metre wide and 4 meter high, with four gates oriented in the cardinal directions. The location is strategically important for controlling traffic and is in the narrowest part of the Limfjord.

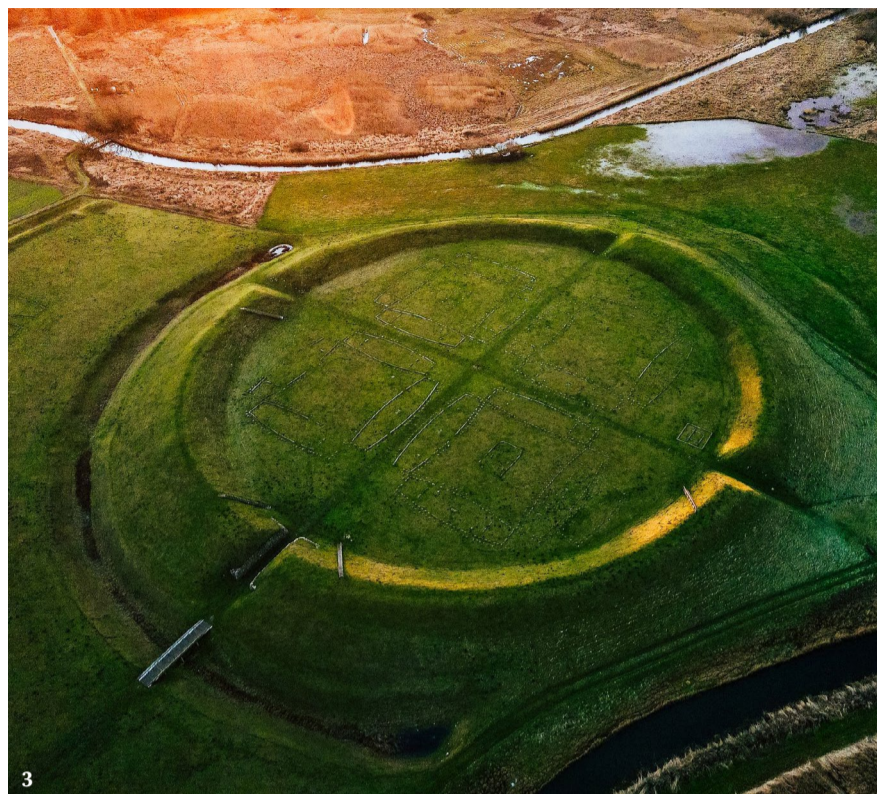
It tends to be less crowded than other forts, and you can see some rudimentary remains. It is near the water and open landscape, making it a good place for fresh air and walks in nature. Because of its location, it also experiences coastal winds, so do not forget to bring appropriate clothing. It is less reconstructed and more raw, so that you can have a different experience than other forts.

4. Nonnebakken (Odense, Funen)

Nonnebakken differs from others because much of the fortress is hidden beneath the city, so ongoing efforts are underway to highlight it. It is located beneath modern-day Odense and, like the others, is part of Harald Blåtand's ring-fortress system.



FYRKAT / CREDIT: DANIEL BRANDT



TRELLEBORG / CREDIT: EVENTURLIGTDK

It also has a unique urban style: you are in the city, walking, and already on the Viking-Age site. It is great for combining with other things in Odense. You can think of this as urban meets archaeology, creating a wonderful experience.

5. Borgring (Køge, Zealand)

The fifth and final site you can visit is Borgring, located about 4km from Køge and added to the UNESCO list in 2023. If you visit there, you can follow the excavations and recent research. It is also a good one-day trip because of its proximity to Copenhagen, and you can check current exhibitions and openings before you go. It will be perfect if you combine it with a stay in Køge or near Copenhagen.

You have just met Denmark's Viking Forts, and now it is time to plan your visit! Here are some tips for visiting:

Best time to visit: I have learned that late spring to early autumn (May to September) is a good time to visit. You can enjoy good weather and on-site activities.

Getting around: If you are living in Copenhagen, you can start with the closer ones, such as Trelleborg and Borgring; it will be a day trip. For the further ones, there are regional trains and local buses.

Tickets & tours: Most sites offer free walking tours, but museums often charge admission, so check their websites.

What to bring: You are living in Denmark, and we never know what the weather will be like. Always have a raincoat and good walking shoes; we don't want your camera to get wet! Check the weather before you go.



BORGRING / CREDIT: MUSEUM SYDDANMARK

According to research by Nordjyske Museer, all of these fortresses symbolised not only power but also the rise of an organised state.

First, their geometric shape demonstrates the Vikings' advanced engineering and strategic thinking. Studies in Science magazine indicate that the forts were not random constructions; they were carefully planned.

These sites connect modern Denmark to its Viking history and remain part of the national heritage, making them a strong draw for visitors from around the world. When you visit these sites, you are seeing history and imagining what the world was like a thousand years ago.

References:

[UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Viking-Age Ring Fortresses \(2023\)](#)
[National Museum of Denmark — "Viking-Age Ring Fortresses" page](#)
[Nonnebakken — VisitOdense page / Borgring — VisitKøge page](#)



NONNEBAKKEN / CREDIT: ODENSE KOMMUNE

ABOUT THE WRITER

Sudaay Tat Haznedar, is a Copenhagen based writer, coach in training, and runner. Originally from Turkey, she moved to Denmark a year ago and now contributes to Last Week in Denmark, writing about international life and local stories.



HOW TO CREATE A HYGGE LIFE IN DENMARK

Adjusting to hygge can feel like learning a new cultural language, yet it comes naturally with time. **Natália Šepitková** explains how the Christmas season deepens the experience.

JESSICA JOELLE ALEXANDER, originally from Florida, spent more than half her life outside the United States. She studied Neuropsychology and Italian, and met her Danish husband while they were both working in Belgium. Having lived in several countries – including Belgium, Italy, Norway, and Denmark – she has always been fascinated by cultural differences and how they shape our perception of the world.

From the moment she arrived in Denmark, she noticed something remarkable about the way Danes raise their children, an essential part of which is the concept of hygge. This inspired her to dedicate her life's work to researching and writing about The Danish Way – an approach to parenting deeply connected to happiness and one that she believes can be applied anywhere in the world.

Her first book, *The Danish Way of Parenting*, co-authored with a Danish psychotherapist has been published in over 35 countries. Since then, she has written four books, conducted research for UC Berkeley, collaborated with LEGO on projects exploring the power of play, and delivered talks, seminars, and workshops around the globe. Most recently, [w](#) rooted, once again, in the Danish approach to well-being and growth.

What does hygge mean to you?

For me, hygge isn't just about candles or cosiness – it's about creating a shared psychological space. It's the moment when we leave behind stress, negativity, and anything divisive, and choose to be fully present with one another. At its heart, hygge is about giving up a little of the "me" for the "we."

Had you heard about the hygge concept before moving to Denmark, or was it the first time you experienced it here?

No, I hadn't heard of the concept before, but I quickly realised it was definitely a thing. In Denmark, you can hardly have a conversation without the word hygge coming up in some form - whether it's a noun, an adjective, or even an adverb. So right from the start, my researcher brain switched on, and I wanted to understand what hygge really meant, especially for someone who didn't grow up Danish.

Is hygge something we can also find in other countries or cultures, under different names?

Some languages have similar concepts - like gezellig in Dutch or koselig in Norwegian. Still, Danish hygge is truly unique once you understand the deeper layers beyond the candles and cosy blankets. It cap-



DAIVA GAULIUTE, JESSICA JOELLE ALEXANDER - CREDIT: @DAIVAGALIUTE

tures something more profound about connection and well-being. I think that's why it officially made its way into the English dictionary in 2016 – there just wasn't another word quite like it.

Is hygge really a factor in a happy life?

I know it is. I've experienced its effects firsthand, and research on well-being and happiness consistently points to concepts like hygge as powerful tools for improving our overall happiness when practised intentionally. Hygge can definitely strengthen

meaningful relationships.

What impact does hygge have on raising children?

It helps you focus on what really matters – the here and now, and all the little things we often overlook. Children absolutely love it when their parents are truly present, enjoying the moment with them and leaving their stresses outside. Understanding hygge and making space for it within family life can have a deeply positive impact on children. It gives them a

DAVA GAULIUTE, JESSICA JOELLE ALEXANDER - CREDIT: @DAVAGAILUTE



“HYGGE ISN’T JUST CANDLES OR COSINESS - IT’S A SHARED PSYCHOLOGICAL SPACE WHERE WE SET ASIDE STRESS AND CHOOSE TO BE FULLY PRESENT WITH ONE ANOTHER. AT ITS HEART, IT’S GIVING UP A LITTLE OF THE ‘ME’ FOR THE ‘WE.’”



DAVA GAULIUTE, JESSICA JOELLE ALEXANDER

sense of safety, connection, and belonging.

Does hygge build better family relationships?
Absolutely.

How does hygge influence your life? When and how is it present in your daily life?

My kids are teenagers now, so I try to seize any opportunity, whenever it comes, to listen to what’s happening in their lives, take a walk together, share funny memories from our past or just marvel at a fallen leaf or sunny day. Hygge can be enjoyed at any age, but it takes awareness from everyone involved. It’s about learning to notice the glimmers – those small moments of joy and beauty – rather than reacting to triggers that pull us apart. In that way, hygge becomes like an oasis from life’s worries and stresses. I didn’t grow up with hygge myself, so I have had to practice it intentionally, but I can see it is becoming much more natural for our kids. What a nice legacy to leave.

What is your hygge tip?

I’ve learned that for hygge to really happen, it has to be a team effort. That’s why I created the Hygge Oath – to help families and friends understand how

to bring “we-fulness” to life. Many parents have told me they’ve printed the Hygge Oath out and put it on their fridge as a gentle reminder. You can find it on thedanishway.com or in my new book, with family therapist Camilla Semlov Andersson, “The Danish Way Everyday”.

Is Christmas the most hygge holiday in Denmark? How does this manifest itself?

It is definitely the most hygge holiday in Denmark! Christmas engages all the senses – the scent of freshly baked cookies and spiced gløgg; the soft glow of candles flickering in every window; the sound of children singing from choirs and kindergartens; the touch of handmade paper hearts and natural decorations of pine cones and moss; and the sight of little Christmas gnomes around seemingly every corner. From creating decorations and baking side by side to singing and dancing hand in hand around the Christmas tree (yes, that really is a thing!) Christmas in Denmark is hygge personified!

Will your Christmas be hygge style?

This Christmas, I will be in Florida for the first time in over 21 years. We have learned, in my American family, after years of practice, that hygge isn’t lim-

ited to candlelit evenings, snowy days, and Danish decorations. It’s really about giving up a little of the “me” for the “we”, and it can be just as meaningful on a sunny beach, with your toes in the sand and the sun on your face-no political discussions, no gossip, screens, negativity or stress. This is where the magic happens, and it’s why I believe that, for non-Danes, hygge must be understood as a psychological space we create as a team. I always say that to really understand and appreciate what hygge is. It’s not mindfulness – it’s we-fulness, and it’s highly beneficial to the heart and soul.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Natália Šepitková is a Slovak freelance journalist and writer based in Aalborg, Denmark, with 15 years of experience across print, TV, radio, and digital media. She also shares stories about life abroad on her blog mamavdansku.com



DANISH CHRISTMAS WORDS BEYOND HYGGE

Brooke Taylor Fossey's tour of FIVE Danish jul-time words that'll take your Danish beyond hygge.



IDAT - PIXABAY

DANISH CHRISTMAS (JUL) is all about hygge. This little word has taken the world by storm, but is often commercialised abroad as home decor-focused: soft blankets, candles, and neutral colours. But in Denmark, hygge is a deeply ingrained philosophy of finding comfort, pleasure and connection in simple things. The emphasis is on togetherness with loved ones, and while the atmosphere helps create hygge, so do the people. Authentic, shared contentment embodies hygge, and it's the perfect word to describe how Danes embrace winter. Here are five more jul-related Danish words to take your Danish language and lifestyle beyond hygge.

1. JULEFROKOST

The julefrokost, literally 'Christmas lunch' is a Danish institution. It's not a single meal but a whole season phenomenon, as offices, clubs, families and groups of friends all host their own festive hours-long feasts throughout late November and even on into January (Danes' calendars fill up fast!).

A julefrokost typically begins with open sandwiches (smørrebrød) and herring (sild), continues with roast pork (flæskesteg) or duck (and) and meatballs (frikadeller), and can include an enthusiastic amount of snaps and singing. They can range from angelic to raucous, and if you ask your coworkers, you may well hear tales from julefrokost gone by and that thing Lars in IT did after the snaps came out.

2. NISSE

Every Danish home with young kids has one new member in December: the

nisse (elf). They have a mischievous smile and a reputation for causing trouble if ignored, but you will probably never meet them! Danes add a nissedør (elf door) to their homes along with any accessories their nisse might need, and at night, many nisser get into mischief while the kids are asleep.

Traditionally, Nissen lived in barns, looked after the animals, and ensured a good harvest, but in return, he expected a bowl of warm risengrød (rice porridge) each evening. Forget his porridge, and he might destroy the crops. Today, he might hide your shoes or colour your milk blue, and children still make sure he's fed, just in case.

3. PAKKELEG

Forget calm gift exchanges, pakkeleg turns Danish Christmas into a full-contact sport. Players bring a wrapped present and set it in a central space. Each participant takes turns rolling dice, and different rules can apply depending on the group. The general idea is that every time you roll a six, you get to grab a gift until all gifts are distributed.

But that's just round one. In round two, the timer starts for an unknown amount of time, and if a six is rolled, the player can steal a gift from another player. If one is rolled, you give one of your presents to someone else. If a two is rolled, you give a gift from one person to another. There are many variations, but chaos generally quickly ensues. It's fast, funny, and slightly stressful!

4. JULEHJERTE

The julehjerter (Christmas heart) is a handmade paper ornament woven in two colours - usually red and white and hung on the Christmas tree, often filled with a traditional Christmas cookie, pebernødder ('pepper nuts'). The tradition is said to have started with Hans Christian Andersen, who created one of the first hearts himself. You can find julehjerter patterns and instructional videos online, and if you want to take it to the next level try the julestjerne (Christmas star), a pattern that confounds even many Danes!

5. RISALAMANDE

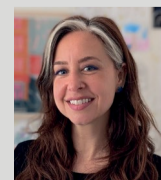
No Danish Christmas dinner is complete without risalamande, a creamy rice dessert served with warm cherry sauce. Hidden inside is a single whole almond amongst many slivered almonds, and the person who finds it wins a small prize (mandelgave literally 'almond gift').

Traditionally, risalamande was made from leftover risengrød and mixed with whipped cream and chopped almonds. Today, it's one of Denmark's most beloved Christmas dishes. and a jovial end to the meal. Some people keep the almond hidden in their mouth or on a napkin just to make their family members finish off all the risalamande!

Each of these words reveals something about Danish culture: playfulness, tradition, and a love of coming together (often over good food). So if you're learning Danish, December is the perfect month to dive in. There's a whole festive vocabulary waiting to be unwrapped, far beyond hygge.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Brooke Taylor Fossey is a Danish language coach and content creator based in Copenhagen. With a background spanning city planning, craft beer, and bagel-making, she now helps learners explore Danish language and culture on [@nearlydanishdame](https://www.nearlydanishdame.com).



A SEASON FOR REGENERATION

As consumer culture peaks in December, **Natalia E.L. Madsen** examines why sustainability must evolve into a regenerative journey - for ourselves and our world.

WITH THE YEAR drawing to a close - and the scent of candied almonds and mulled wine filling the air - December offers us a natural pause from our day-to-day rhythm; a moment to reflect and take stock of where we are and where we're headed. It's a time of endings, yes, but also of beginnings. And in this spirit of renewal, maybe we can dare to ask deeper questions - not just about our own personal lives, but about the world around us.

WHEN TRADITION GIVES WAY TO (OVER) CONSUMPTION

In many Western cultures, the end of the year has become synonymous with consumerism. Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Singles' Day - all aimed at encouraging excess - set the scene for the Christmas period that follows: more gifts, more packaging, more goods transported and returns around the globe. The joy of giving (and receiving) is deeply human, but at times it comes at grave environmental cost.

Thankfully, alternatives are slowly emerging. More and more people are choosing to gift experiences over things, or local, handmade items over mass-produced ones. Awareness around food waste, ethical shopping or 'quality over quantity' is growing. Some might argue these choices diminish the magic of the season, but to me, they strengthen it. They reconnect us to meaning, to personal relations, and - for some - to something bigger than ourselves.

SUSTAINABILITY: MORE THAN "DO NO HARM"

In the sustainability field, we often encounter a well-intentioned but dangerous mindset: that being sustainable means simply reducing harm. Plant-based diets, public transportation, and conscious consumerism. These are all important steps, but they're not enough.

True sustainability asks more of us. It asks us not only to stop the damage but to repair it. To restore ecosystems, rewild landscapes, and regenerate communities. Approaching sustainability without regeneration is like trying to mend a wounded limb by simply avoiding further injury - it doesn't address the healing itself.

WHAT IS REGENERATION?

In simple terms, regeneration is linked to renewal and restoration, to bringing things to a better state. In ecological terms, regeneration means restoring biodiversity, reviving degraded lands and building resilience, ultimately aiming for a net-positive impact on the planet. If 'doing no harm' is stopping deforestation, then regeneration is bringing the forest back.

But regeneration isn't just about nature - it's also about people. It's about creating systems that nourish human well-being, equity, and resilience. Regenerative agriculture, for example, doesn't just grow food - it rebuilds soil, supports farmers, and strengthens local economies.

REGENERATING OUR LIVES

So what does regeneration mean for our personal lives?

It means being intentional about how we live, work, and relate to each other. A regenerative lifestyle nourishes rather than depletes - not only ourselves, but also our communities and our environment.

Regeneration is a deeply personal journey in which we rediscover what it means to live well and try to build our lives around those principles. For some, regeneration will mean spending time in nature and learning from its rhythms and for others, practising gratitude and generosity in ways that go beyond material gifts. Someone else might choose to engage in community initiatives that rebuild trust and a shared sense of purpose.

Common to all is the goal of slowing down, being intentional with our time,



BOGOMIL-MIHAYLOV-EPCDCTYPRPE-UNSPLASH

**"THE PROMISE OF REGENERATION IS
THE PROMISE OF NEW BEGINNINGS."**

and investing in relationships and practices that restore our energy rather than drain it.

NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As we prepare to step into a new year, let's carry this regenerative lens with us. Let's move beyond 'doing less harm' and embrace sustainability as a regenerative journey - not only for the planet, but also for ourselves and our communities.

The challenges we face - climate change, biodiversity loss, social divide - are immense. But we must believe that they are not insurmountable. Regeneration invites us to be co-creators of a future where life, in all its forms, can thrive.

So this December, as we gather with loved ones and reflect on the year behind us, let's ask: What can I regenerate in my life? What can we regenerate in our communities? And how can we make the coming year not just 'less bad' - but actually better?

Because in the end, the promise of regeneration is the promise of new beginnings and a better future for all.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Natalia E.L. Madsen is a sustainability specialist passionate about inspiring action towards a greener future. Bridging science and strategy, she champions sustainability to drive meaningful corporate change.



THE ENTREPRENEUR'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

This month, **Diana-Medrea Mogensen** discusses how entrepreneurs can navigate December without burnout and build momentum for the new year.



DECEMBER IS THE month when entrepreneurs feel the weight of two worlds colliding: the final push to complete the year and the growing need to rest, reset, and plan for the next. While most people look forward to the holidays, small business owners often face the year-end rush with spreadsheets open, invoices pending, and a mind already spinning toward January.

This article is doing what matters.

1. ALLOCATE AND DELEGATE BEFORE YOU COLLAPSE

The biggest December trap is believing you must personally tie every loose end. The smarter move is to decide what absolutely needs your attention and what can be delegated or postponed.

Look at your to-do list and ask: What is essential to close this year well? Maybe it's sending that final invoice, filing your taxes, or confirming contracts for next year. Everything else can wait.

If you have a team, trust them. If you work alone, outsource where possible: bookkeeping, design updates, and admin tasks. Many freelancers are happy to take on short assignments before year-end. Delegation is not a luxury; it is how you keep your energy available for work that actually moves your business forward.

2. SCHEDULE FOR THE NEXT YEAR BEFORE THE OLD ONE ENDS

January does not start from zero. The clarity you bring into it depends on the structure you create now. Before you close your laptop for the holidays, take one focused afternoon to sketch your first quarter.

Start with what you already know: confirmed projects, recurring clients, or fixed commitments. Then outline your key priorities for the next three months, perhaps launching a new offer, updating your website, or running a campaign. Put them in the calendar, even tentatively.

Having dates, even provisional ones, prevents the fog that comes when January arrives, and everything feels undefined. In the future, you will thank yourself.

3. BOUNDARIES ARE A BUSINESS STRATEGY

Boundaries are not about saying no to others, but about saying yes to your own

sustainability. When you run a small business, it is easy to think that every new inquiry or event must be accepted immediately. Yet no business can function indefinitely in reactive mode.

Set communication boundaries now. Inform clients of your availability during the holidays, update your out-of-office message, and block a few quiet days for yourself. If you struggle to switch off, start by defining small limits, for example, no new meetings after December 20, or one full weekend without checking emails.

Rest is not the opposite of productivity; it is part of it. The entrepreneurs who last are not the ones who work nonstop, but those who recover strategically.

4. REFLECT ON THE JOURNEY INSTEAD OF MEASURING ONLY THE RESULTS

December is an ideal month for reflection, not reinvention. Instead of writing a long list of what you did not accomplish, take a structured look at what you did achieve and how.

Ask yourself:

- What worked this year, and why?
- What drained me, and how can I prevent that next year?
- Which habits or decisions actually moved my business forward?

Write the answers down. The process of reflection creates awareness, and awareness becomes direction. Many entrepreneurs underestimate this step because it doesn't "feel productive," but it is the foundation for strategic growth.

Also, acknowledge the invisible progress, the clients retained, the systems improved, and the confidence gained. You may not see it on a balance sheet, but it shapes the future of your business.

5. APPRECIATION AS A LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Before closing the year, thank your collaborators, clients, and supporters. A short, genuine message goes a long way.

Extend the same gratitude to yourself. You carried uncertainty, managed finances, made decisions others might never see, and still kept your business alive. Survival in entrepreneurship is not a small achievement; it is the baseline of success.

Taking a few hours to look back with appreciation does not slow you down. It grounds you in reality, which is the only stable place to build from.

Entrepreneurship does not pause for the holidays, but you can. December is not the time to fix everything you didn't do during the year. It is the time to consolidate what you have built, protect your energy, and approach the next chapter with intention.

Happy holidays, everyone!

ABOUT THE WRITER

Diana Medrea-Mogensen is a Romanian-born entrepreneur, funding strategist, and educator based in Denmark. She founded We Are Entrepreneurs to empower expats and underrepresented groups in building sustainable businesses.



NEW DANES NEW REALITIES

As Denmark grows more dependent on international workers, **Kelly Draper Rasmussen** examines the newcomers reshaping its cities, suburbs and shrinking towns.

IN THE LAST twelve months, 82,000 internationals arrived in Denmark and 55,000 left, resulting in a net migration of over 29,000 people.

This matters because Denmark's natural population growth, defined as births minus deaths, was approximately 800 people nationwide during that period. Population growth in Denmark depends on immigration and returning of Danes.

Many new arrivals are temporary exchange students who distort the overall picture by leaving in the same year; therefore, net migration figures (people in minus people out) provide a clearer picture of who is staying with a view to building their lives in Denmark.

The top five nationalities by net migration were Ukraine, Nepal, Bangladesh, Germany and the Philippines. Together, Nepal and Bangladesh account for 17% of Denmark's total population growth this year.

Some nationalities showed net losses: Lithuania, Syria, Poland, Bulgaria and Norway. Countries with the highest churn rates (where nearly as many people left as arrived) were the United Kingdom, Romania, the USA, Australia, and Japan. This may be related to seasonal, temporary workers and exchange students.

WHERE MIGRANTS SETTLE: FOUR VERY DIFFERENT DENMARKS

Where did the new immigrants move to? To understand settlement patterns, we classified each kommune into three categories: The Big Four cities (Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg), wealthier Copenhagen suburbs (Frederiksberg, Lyngby-Taarbæk, Gentofte, Rudersdal), working-class Copenhagen suburbs (Ishøj, Høje-Taastrup, Glostrup, Albertslund, Brøndby, Herlev, Rødovre, Vallensbæk, Hvidovre, Gladsaxe), and everywhere else.

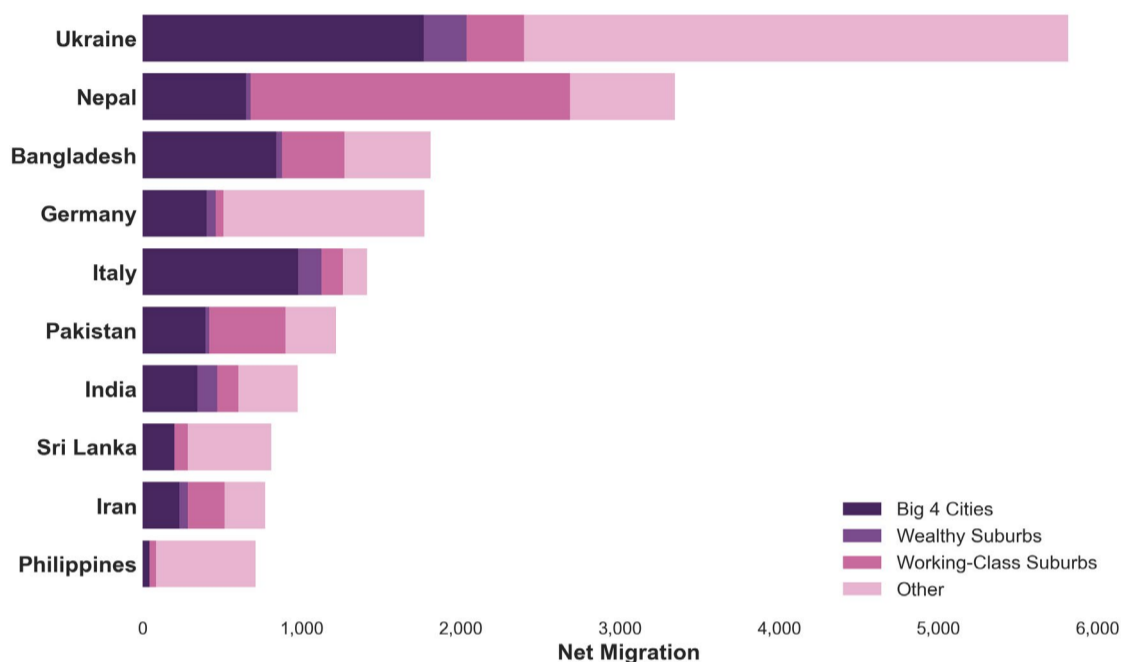
The patterns are stark. Different areas attract entirely different populations:

The 4 major cities attracted people from Ukraine, Italy, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Germany.

The wealthy Copenhagen suburbs attracted people from Ukraine, Spain, Italy, India, and Portugal.

Working-class Copenhagen suburbs are a different story: Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ukraine and Iran. Nepalese migrants alone account for 42% of all net migration to these areas.

The rest of Denmark attracted people from Ukraine, Germany, Nepal, the Philippines and Bangladesh. Germans cluster near the southern border in Sønderborg, Aabenraa and Tønder. Settlement patterns outside major cities follow the E45 highway corridor: Denmark's north-south artery connecting to Germany through Jutland. Three of the top five



smaller kommuner with the highest net migration (Kolding, Vejle, Herning) lie directly along this route, suggesting that this year's cohort moved for work.

Which kommuner received the greatest diversity of nationalities? Copenhagen led with migrants from 80 different countries, followed by Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg.

The remainder were wealthy Copenhagen suburbs: Frederiksberg, Lyngby-Taarbæk, Gentofte, and Rudersdal, and two cities in the Triangle Region: Vejle and Kolding. These ten communities have attracted dozens of different nationalities this year.

Denmark's demographic challenge is stark. This year, 38 kommuner experienced population decline despite foreign immigration. Places such as Frederikshavn, Lolland, and Kalundborg experienced population decline even as foreigners arrived. In Kalundborg's case, 382 foreign migrants couldn't offset the reduction in Danish population.

Sønderborg's population grew by 48 people this year, but foreign net migration was +810, meaning the original population actually declined by more than 700 people. Similar patterns appear in Randers, Billund, Herning and Gentofte. Foreigners are masking demographic collapse in many communities.

POLITICS AND POLICY: CAN DENMARK AFFORD TO BE SELECTIVE?

This year, the government attempted to reshape migration policy. They created a new residence permit for 2026 targeting nationals from 16 countries deemed more likely to integrate (including the USA,

UK, Japan, Australia: the countries with the highest churn rates this year). The government also promoted a political scandal surrounding universities enrolling overseas students from Nepal and Bangladesh, and tightened rules on study permits to deter this pattern in the future.

Denmark faces labour shortages in many industries. The politicians in power would clearly prefer to address these shortages by excluding certain nationalities. With natural population growth in only the three figures and 38 kommuner shrinking, the country clearly depends on foreigners to prevent decline. The question is whether Denmark can afford to be picky.

DATA SOURCES (Statistics Denmark):

FOLK1A: Population by region and time (2024Q3 to 2025Q3)
VAN1KVT: Immigration by region, citizenship and time (2024Q4, 2025Q1, 2025Q2, 2025Q3)
VAN2KVT: Emigration by region, citizenship and time (2024Q4, 2025Q1, 2025Q2, 2025Q3)

ABOUT THE WRITER

Kelly Draper Rasmussen is a Denmark-based data analyst who makes complex immigration and labour data accessible through her Data in Denmark newsletter. Her research has informed national policies and supports international communities.



CHOCOLATE SWISS ROLL

Natasha Liviero brings nostalgic charm to this festive bake, layering soft sponge with a sweet cream filling and finishing with a rich dark-chocolate ganache. Easier than it looks, and well worth a try.



CHOCOLATE SWISS ROLL (Makes a 30cm x 43cm Swiss roll)

Cake ingredients:

60g flour
30g cocoa powder
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
4 XL eggs
164g castor sugar
56g neutral oil
5g espresso powder
10g vanilla extract

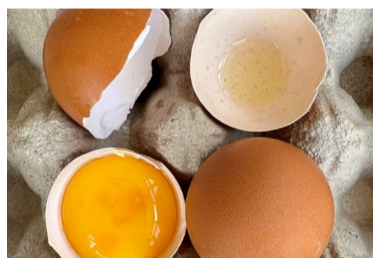
Cream filling ingredients:

250g cream
100g mascarpone
40g icing sugar, sifted
15g Kahlua liqueur (or alcohol/
extract of choice)

Chocolate Ganache ingredients:

130g cream
140g dark chocolate, chopped
5g honey
Milk chocolate grated for decoration

Notes: Slice the Swiss roll with a serrated knife.

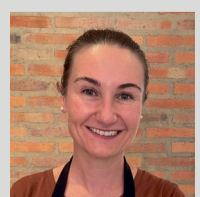


Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 175°C, grease a large 30cm x 43cm rimmed baking tray with non-stick baking spray, and line the base with baking paper.
2. Sift together the flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt and set aside.
3. Separate the eggs and whisk the whites with 64g of the sugar in a stand mixer until stiff peaks form.
4. Transfer the egg whites to a clean bowl, and place the yolks and remaining sugar in the same mixing bowl you used to whisk the whites. Whisk on high until light and fluffy (it won't form firm peaks).
5. Add the oil, espresso powder and vanilla to the egg yolk mixture and whisk on high for another minute.
6. Add the egg whites in two batches, whisking on low, being careful not to knock out all the air - around 30 seconds in total.
7. In three batches, sift the flour into the egg mixture, gently folding in each addition with a large spatula.
8. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking tray and spread evenly with an offset spatula or palette knife. Shimmy the pan and tap three times.
9. Bake for 12 minutes or until the top of the cake gently springs back when pressed. (Do not overbake the cake, or it will crack when rolling.)
10. While the cake is baking, prepare a sheet of baking paper/kitchen tea towel larger than the tray and dust with cocoa powder/icing sugar.
11. When the cake comes out of the oven, quickly run a palette knife around the edges and dust the surface with cocoa powder/icing sugar.
12. Invert the cake onto the baking paper/kitchen tea towel and gently peel off the baking paper (that was at the bottom of the pan).
13. Starting with the narrow end, tuck the paper/tea towel over the edge of the cake and firmly roll up the cake. Set aside to cool for a few hours.
14. **For the filling:** whisk together all the ingredients until stiff peaks form. The cream mixture must hold its shape inside the Swiss roll, so it must be firm.
15. Gently unroll the cake (I find it easier if you lift the cake slightly as you unroll it). Spread the cream evenly over the cake, leaving a border. Be sure to fill the first curl/roll of the cake generously; once rolled, it will be the inside of the swirl.
16. Gently roll the cake back up, using the paper/tea towel to assist if need be. At this point, you can wrap it in baking paper and refrigerate it overnight.
17. For the ganache, heat the cream in a saucepan until it begins to simmer.
18. Place the chocolate in a heatproof bowl and pour over the hot cream. Leave to stand for two minutes then whisk until smooth. Add the honey and whisk again to fully combine.
19. Place the Swiss roll onto a wire cooling rack placed over a baking pan. Pour the ganache over the cake, spreading and smoothing it down the sides, ensuring the entire cake is covered before setting aside for the ganache too set.
20. Place the Swiss roll onto a serving plate and decorate with a grating of milk chocolate.
21. Store leftovers covered in the fridge for up to 3 days.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Natasha Liviero is a South African pastry chef with Croatian heritage and a passion for European patisserie. She spends her days crafting recipes, sparring with her cats, and sharing her pastry journey on Instagram [@natashaliviero](https://www.instagram.com/natashaliviero).



LETTING THE YEAR LAND

Fiona L Smith reflects on the body's need for pause and how it transforms the way we close the year.



LIGHTMAGNET - PIXABAY

THERE IS A moment towards the end of the year when there's a pause. The rush of Christmas is over, and it's not quite an ending or a beginning; just a quiet threshold where the world feels almost as though it's holding its breath. Most of us rush past it and jump straight into the New Year with bubbles and fireworks, plans, resolutions, and lists of what we think we should change. But before we set off, there is real value in letting the old year land.

LISTENING TO THE BODY'S STORY

We often think of reflection as a mental activity - something we do with thoughts, memory, and a blank sheet of paper. But long before we arrive at the point of putting words to our experience, our bodies have been storing data: signals of stress and safety, the pace we lived at, the moments we pushed through exhaustion, the times we softened, the relationships that steadied or unsettled us, the moments of joy and despair. Some activities fed our sense of self and belonging. And there were moments when we felt overstretched, unseen, or discouraged.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio describes these accumulated emotional impressions as "somatic markers" - body-based signals that guide later decisions and shape how we interpret our experiences, often outside conscious awareness. We notice them as feelings, urges or procrastination, but they begin far deeper than thought.

This is why the end of the year can feel charged - or flat - in a way that's difficult to name. Our experience this year isn't just what happened; it's also what our nervous system has had to hold. Many of us, especially those who live away from home, spend the year in states of constant adaptation. New environments, expectations, languages and systems stretch the body's capacity in ways we may not fully recognise until we stop and listen.

Letting the year land begins with noticing what arises when we do pause. Not in a forced or analytical way, but with curiosity. What memories come forward first? Which images from the year still feel alive when you recall them? What moments lift your heart, and what returns with a tightening in the chest or a heaviness in the stomach? We remember stories, but the body shows us meanings.

Some things went well this year, even if your nervous system has been running so fast that you've hardly registered them. Many high-achieving internationals - especially women, and even more so, mothers - are so used to scanning and

**"MAY THE ROAD RISE TO MEET YOU;
MAY YOUR TROUBLES BE LESS AND YOUR
BLESSINGS BE MORE, AND MAY THE YEAR
AHEAD BE FULL OF JOY AND CONNECTION."**

planning ahead for what needs managing that we skim past our own successes and growth. Offering a space to feel into what strengthened you completes stress cycles and signals to your system that your effort was worth it.

Perhaps you held a boundary, voiced your opinion, navigated a difficult transition, or chose rest instead of pushing. Maybe you made difficult decisions that moved you closer to the life you want or got the promotion you worked so hard for. If we don't acknowledge these moments, the nervous system doesn't fully receive the update that we have grown.

GATHERING LESSONS AND LETTING GO

There are also lessons to gather, but not in the 'everything I did wrong' voice of the inner critic. Instead, look for patterns. Where did you feel most like yourself? When did you feel out of alignment? When you recall certain moments or events, does your breath tighten? Did you stay when your body said go? Or remain silent when something in you desperately wanted to speak out? The body often answers before the mind: it can show us where we pushed too hard, where we abandoned ourselves, and where old protective habits resurfaced. This kind of learning is compassionate, recognising that every response was adaptive in the moment.

And then, there's a courageous question: what are you ready to leave behind? Letting go isn't a single decision; it's a process. Is there a role you're no longer willing to play, an expectation that has grown too heavy, or a story you've been telling about yourself that no longer fits? Letting the year land includes grieving what didn't happen, the hopes that didn't materialise or the dreams you postponed because life demanded too much. It can also mean celebrating what you forgot to acknowledge, and moving on because you've found the courage and support to do so.

As the year closes, there is an opportunity to quietly take measure. What genuinely supported me this year? What helped me feel connected, grounded or inspired? In what moments - and with whom - did I feel a sense of belonging? Often it is small things: a dance class, a walk by the sea, someone who saw you, a friendship that steadied you, or the moments when you listened to your body rather than pushing through.

In this space between years, allow yourself to stop reacting out of exhaustion, obligation, or habit, and choose from a place of clarity instead. Gather the threads of what mattered, notice what still resonates, and steady yourself, allowing your body to guide you into the year ahead.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Fiona L Smith is a Somatic Therapist, Coach & Nervous System expert who supports women to heal from burnout & anxiety and reclaim ease and confidence. UK born, she lives in Rødovre with her family and loves walking, winter dips, and sunshine.





ENGINEERING, R&D & INNOVATION, NCE & MED - VESTAS GRADUATE PROGRAMME

Are you eager to start your career path with an enterprise that is at the forefront of sustainability, and team up with a wide-ranging group of proficient professionals internationally?

Location: Aarhus

Deadline: 15 January 2026

Contact: graduateprogramme@vestas.com

GLOBAL COORDINATOR - MATERNITY COVER

You will be responsible for coordinating attendance across Europe, working closely with Global Technical Specialists and other Global Coordinators.

Location: Aalborg

Deadline: 9 January 2026

Contact: Kasper Juul Kristensen,
Field Service Manager
+45 20 42 66 38

RESERVATIONS & SUCCESS MANAGER (MATERNITY COVER)

Daniel & Jacob's Apartments is looking for a full-time colleague. You will be the heart of our guest communication and the person ensuring smooth, warm, memorable stays every single day.

Location: Copenhagen

Deadline: When filled

Contact: N/A

To advertise your vacancy here, contact:

info@englishjobdenmark.dk
or call 60 70 22 98.

For more information
about what we can offer:

<https://englishjobdenmark.dk/>

RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

FULL-TIME SERVICE & PROJECT COORDINATOR WITH A FOCUS ON ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS AND SUPPORT FOR OUR TEMPORARY WORKERS

At BlueCollar, the well-being and success of our temporary workers are top priorities. To strengthen our internal operations, we are now seeking a dedicated and responsible Service & Project Coordinator.

Location: Odense

Deadline: When filled

Contact: Silvija Stonciute, Operations Manager
+45 54 58 69 05

PROJECT MANAGER FOR SOFTWARE UPGRADES TO DENMARK'S NEW DIGITAL RAILWAY SIGNALLING SYSTEM (ERTMS)

You will be responsible for end-to-end delivery of major software upgrades to the new digital signalling system, including defect corrections, functional enhancements and new capabilities.

Location: Copenhagen

Deadline: When filled

Contact: Jon Nielsen, Head of Project Delivery
+45 25 18 33 17

SUPPLY CHAIN ANALYST WITH FOCUS ON DEMAND PLANNING

You support decision making by gathering, analysing and interpreting data. You contribute to efficiency and improvements in Hoyer supply chain by developing and maintaining supplier- and supply chain related KPI/PI.

Location: Hoyer, Hadsten

Deadline: When filled

Contact: Alicja Hermann-Klosowska,
SC Process Excellence and
Analytics Manager
+45 8711 42 12

KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER – ENGLISH & SPANISH SPEAKING (DANISH WOULD BE A PLUS)

You will be responsible for driving growth in selected international markets. You will play a vital role in executing the export strategy within your branch, building strong relationships with distributors and key customers, and ensuring profitable growth.

Location: East Jutland

Deadline: When filled

Contact: Christian Saabye Simonsen
+45 51 30 68 66

DIGITAL MARKETING & E-COMMERCE COORDINATOR - THE DUTCH MARKET (DUTCH/ENG NEEDED)

You will plan, execute, and optimize digital campaigns, webshop activities, and content, ensuring we succeed both online and offline in the Dutch market.

Location: Greve or Randers

Deadline: 31 December 2025

Contact: Annette Mogensen,
Marketing Manager
+45 23 71 17 14

B2B CONTENT SPECIALIST WITH STRONG VIDEO SKILLS

You'll craft compelling content that captivates audiences, strengthens our brand across multiple platforms, and inspires thousands to embrace the future of sustainable solutions for food retail stores, commercial buildings and industrial applications around the world.

Location: Brabrand

Deadline: When filled

Contact: CMO Lisette Lykke Hansen
llh@advansor.com
+45 35 25 60 39

TECHNICAL WRITER – TURNING COMPLEXITY INTO CLARITY

We are seeking a skilled and detail-oriented Technical Writer with proven experience in developing clear, precise, and user-focused documentation. Someone who is curious about wireless and internet technologies and thrives on transforming complex technical information into accessible, well-structured content.

Location: Nørresundby

Deadline: When filled

Contact: Henrik Daugaard,
Customer Support Manager
+45 96 32 23 00

We support international:

Students, Graduates, Spouses,
Professional Job Seekers & Career
Changers through an online
community, workshops, events and
1:1 coaching.

Find out more at:

englishjobdenmark.dk/