

District 1470, Inbound Team S22 – A bit about Danes & Denmark

Dear Team S22 students

We hope that you will be reading up on your host country for the year starting in August 2022 (as well as starting to learn the language), but we also would like to share a bit. It is only meant to give you as much preparations as possible before getting here, so please do not feel that you have to learn everything ahead of time.

Please be also sure to read material on the Rotary.dk website <https://www.rotary.dk/sections/yep> - under

- COMING TO DENMARK

Time

In Denmark agreements about times are firm. If we agree to meet at 19, then we meet at 18:55-19:05. If we are delayed more than 5-10 min, we will inform the others about our delay (or just one contact). Please also be sure to do this – it is regarded as impolite to be late.

For school arrival on time is mandatory and getting to class late means registration as absence.

Participation – be present

In Denmark we participate when we have accepted an event, meeting etc.

It is regarded as impolite to immediately look at your phone or “go on mental stand-by”. In some case, this may be ok after a while, but if at a dinner or a meeting where you can understand what is going on, then it will be impolite to not be present and engaged.

Of course, as long as you do not know the language, some things will be a bit boring, but if you are a bit proactive it does not have to be that way: when arriving – ask if you can help with anything, go around and say hello (unless no one else does this), ask a person you know at the location what you should do.

Transportation

In Denmark parents do not drive their children around. Sometimes a lift by car may be offered, but you cannot expect this, and you will have to get around on your own.

Please be sure that you can bike before you get here (or at least try as much as you can to learn it). Even though a few from the team will live in the city and may not feel comfortable biking due to lot of bike traffic, a lot of things are just easier if you can bike. And many of you will most likely bike to school, simply because that is what is done and it is more flexible than public transport.

Otherwise, public transportation is really good in Denmark, easy to use and safe. It covers busses, trains and metro in all of Denmark, and in the Greater Copenhagen and Northern Sealand area (district 1470) the coverage is very good.

As the club will provide you with transportation for i.e. Language school, you will get a travel card, but it may be a bit delayed as it is linked to you visa (and then “registration as a temporary Dane”),

and there is an App which makes it easy to get around: “Rejseplanen” (travel planner) with this logo:



Please be prepared that you most likely will have to find your own way around very soon after you get to Denmark – as this is what young Danes do. If you have any questions regarding this, please do discuss with your Host Counsellor and/or Host Family.

Politeness & respect

In Danish we say “tak” (thank you) a lot. After a meal or when someone hands you something, helps you or gives you a gift, we say “tak” – in different versions perhaps, but that you will learn.

Even though Danes are a quite relaxed, it is important that you show respect and be polite, otherwise it is easy to get the communication wrong. Of course, Danes should also show you respect and be polite to you, but sometimes one side has to initiate and the only one you for sure can influence is yourself. So, if you for example are asked if you like a meal – don’t say “I have had better”, but perhaps “it is different from what I have tried before” or even “it will not become a favorite of mine”

Danes are in general not a very confrontational. This means that for example we will ask you not to repeat doing something, and then we expect that to be settled without a big fuss about it. This also means that you have to respect what you are told – you can ask about it to understand perhaps even challenge it, but you have to live with it, if the decision stands. So if you are told not to go to a given event, then you have to respect that you cannot (even if others you know by then will be going).

As all of Rotary Youth Exchange in Denmark is volunteer based (also Host families) it may be that they feel you should show appreciation. Please do – by being polite, appreciative, proactive, engaged – all the B’s that you already have learned about 😊.

We will do our best to form the basis for a good year for you – the rest is up to you.

Language – Danes “talk funny”

Not only do we have a language, which is quite different from anything you have learned before, but we also tend to “talk funny”. By this is meant that we do not pronounce all the letters in the words, and often many Danes talk quite fast and some even “swallow” parts of the words.

Sounds crazy? – well, it is perhaps not that bad 😊

The reason for mentioning it, is that it is quite all right to ask Danes to talk slower and pronounce the words more precisely.

Also, many Danes (especially younger people) tend to use quite a bit of English swear words. It is not meant as hard as it is understood in English speaking countries, so please just ignore it – and try not to pick up this bad habit. You are also welcome to comment, as it may even help the person understand how it is perceived.

For getting a more fun angle on this, you can for sure find funny (and historic) YouTube videos about the language i.e. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI5DPt3Ge_s (sorry, I cannot filter your search: some may not be for your age group, so please filter by yourself what you look at).

Humour, irony, and sarcasm

A lot of Danes use irony and sarcasm in the everyday language. This can sometimes cause situations where we misunderstand each other, and one party feel hurt. If there is something, you do not

understand or you feel hurt by something said - and even though others may be laughing – please do ask or comment. No one wants you to feel hurt, and sometimes Danes just forget that you come from another culture.

Some Danes have a so called “dark” sense of humour. They may say things just to start a discussion or just “for the fun of it”. It is never meant as hurtful but may feel that way. Always ask or comment.

Weather

Denmark is strongly affected by all the oceans around us. This means that it is:

- Almost always windy to some extent (and thus feels colder than it is “out of the wind”)
- Quite often rains
- Seldom gets really cold in the winter – but then wind will make it feel so
- Often changing during the day/night

So, Denmark is a good country to bring:

- Rain clothes (both jacket and pants) – umbrellas are not always useful due to the wind
- Clothing which allows for “layers” – meaning that you can take layers on/off depending on you being cold or warm
- Warm winter jacket which is rain proof
- Good walking shoes that are water proof

In case this is not really possible to get in the country you come from, we have many second-hand shops or department stores where these items can be bought at not too high a price (please be aware this is something you have to pay for yourself).

“Changing of light”

As Denmark is geographically located in the north, the light changes during the year – meaning that there is much daytime during the summer and not so much during the winter.

At midsummer the daylight is a bit more than 17 hours, where as midwinter is approx. 7 hours.

This of course has an impact on how we live. So during the summer Danes tend to be more outside also in the evenings, whereas in the winter Danes tend to be more at home and visiting each others homes as well as doing in-door activities.

For some students, the winter can be quite hard to get through, but please be sure to make an effort and be sure to always get up in the morning for school - even though if it is dark. It is not uncommon that some feel a need to sleep more during the winter. If so, be sure to go to bed earlier.

Focus on the things which are then enjoyed – and remember that the light will return. The nice thing is that from middle/end November till end January a lot of gardens and balconies have outdoor light decorations, which light up the darkness 😊

Food

Denmark is an old farming country, so the traditional food tends to be “a bit heavy” with meat, potatoes and some vegetables. However, Denmark has also become a place for global cuisine, so there is a wide variety of food eaten. It varies a lot from family to family what kind of food is eaten, but most try to have a varied diet during the week.

One thing that most of you will be introduced to is “rugbrød” (rye bread - <https://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=rugbr%C3%B8d>). It is a sour-dough based bread on rye and is very filling. It is the basis for the Danish “smørrebrød” (open sandwiches - <https://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=sm%C3%B8rrebr%C3%B8d>), and it is not everyone that takes a liking to this.

If there are things you are allergic to or very strong dislikes, please be sure to discuss this with your Host Families (if dislikes, they may try to challenge you a bit).

Please try out whatever is served for you – you never know, you might actually like it 😊

The social welfare system

As you may have heard we have a very good social welfare system in Denmark, which is paid for by our very high taxes. This also covers the health system. While you are in Denmark, you are also connected to a doctor and can go to the hospital as part of this system.

However, it is relevant to mention that only illness/problems occurring during your year will be treated under this system. If you have existing problems or must take medicine, it is expected that this is handled from your home country and that you bring needed medicine for the year. Should there be any questions regarding this, please do reach out to your Host Counsellor or Host District.

Any questions? – we most likely cannot answer all before you get to Denmark, but feel free to ask

