THOMAS HJORT

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What is Hygge?
"Hygge isn't something you see - it's something you feel."

If there is one word that truly captures the spirit of Denmark, it is hygge. Although it has become famous around the world, hygge is far more than a trend or a design style. It is a way of living, a way of slowing down, and a way of appreciating life's simple pleasures.

> "For Danes, hygge is not reserved for special occasions. It is part of everyday life"

There is no perfect English translation of the word. Some describe hygge as cosiness, others as comfort or contentment, but none of these words fully express its meaning. Hygge is about creating an atmosphere where you feel safe, relaxed and connected - with yourself, with nature, or with the people around you.

For Danes, hygge is not reserved for special occasions. It is part of everyday life. It can be found in sharing dinner with family, enjoying coffee with friends, reading a book on a rainy afternoon, lighting candles on a winter evening, or taking a peaceful walk through one of Copenhagen's beautiful parks.

The Danish Art of Simple Living
Denmark is consistently ranked among the world's happiest countries, and while there is no single explanation, many believe hygge plays an important role. Instead of constantly searching for bigger or better things, Danish culture encourages people to appreciate what they already have.

Hygge is not about luxury or expensive experiences. In fact, it is often the opposite. A homemade meal can be more hyggelig than a five-star restaurant.

Sitting around a campfire with friends can feel more special than an extravagant party. The focus is not on possessions, but on moments. This philosophy is visible everywhere in Copenhagen. Parks are filled with people enjoying picnics. Cafés invite visitors to stay a little longer.



Families cycle together through quiet streets, while candles glow in windows during the darker months. Even in one of Scandinavia's busiest capitals, there is always room to slow down.

Hygge is About Being Present

Perhaps the most important part of hygge is presence. It means putting away your phone, slowing your pace and truly appreciating the moment you're in. Whether you are watching the waves at Amager Beach Park, walking beneath the cherry blossoms of Bispebjerg Cemetery, exploring the ancient forests of Dyrehaven or simply sharing coffee with a friend, hygge encourages you to enjoy life without rushing.

It is a reminder that happiness often comes from the smallest moments - the warmth of the sun on your face, the laughter of good friends, the sound of birds in a quiet park, or the comforting aroma of freshly baked cinnamon rolls.

Discover Your Own Hygge

This book is your invitation to experience Copenhagen the Danish way. Rather than rushing from one famous attraction to the next, you'll discover places where life slows down, where nature meets the city, and where simple moments become unforgettable memories.

As you explore Copenhagen's parks, gardens, beaches, cafés, hidden streets and historic neighbourhoods, you may discover that hygge is not something uniquely Danish after all - it is a feeling that anyone can experience.

All you have to do is slow down, look around, and enjoy the moment.

Danish Culture

Simple Living, Equality and Everyday Happiness

To truly understand hygge, it helps to understand the culture that gave birth to it. Denmark is a country where simplicity, trust and balance are deeply rooted in everyday life. While Copenhagen is a modern European capital filled with innovation, design and international influences, many of the values that shape Danish society have remained unchanged for generations.

Visitors often notice that life in Denmark feels calm. People rarely rush, there is little emphasis on showing wealth, and everyday interactions are polite and respectful. Rather than standing out, Danes generally value being part of a community where everyone is treated equally.

Equality Matters
Denmark is one of the world's most equal societies. Equality is reflected in everything from education and healthcare to workplace culture and daily conversations.

People usually address each other by their first names, regardless of profession or social status. It is perfectly normal for employees to call their manager by their first name, and even members of the Danish Royal Family are often admired for their down-to-earth lifestyle.

Humility is highly valued. Success is appreciated, but showing off is generally discouraged. Instead, people admire kindness, honesty and authenticity.

A Culture Built on Trust
One of the first things many visitors notice is the extraordinary level of trust in Danish society.

Parents often leave babies sleeping outside cafés in their prams while they enjoy a cup of coffee inside. Cyclists leave their bikes unattended for short periods, and many businesses operate with very little visible security.

This high level of trust extends to everyday life. Danes generally expect people to keep their promises, respect rules and consider the wellbeing of others.

The Love of Nature
Nature plays a central role in Danish life.
Even in Copenhagen, green spaces are never far away. Parks, beaches, forests and lakes are woven into the city, encouraging people to spend time outdoors throughout the year.

Whether it's cycling through The King's Garden, swimming in the harbour, walking in Dyrehaven or enjoying a picnic in Frederiksberg Gardens, spending time in nature is considered an important part of a healthy and balanced life.

Fresh air isn't something Danes avoid because of the weather - they embrace it.

Cycling as a Way of Life
In Copenhagen, bicycles outnumber cars in many parts of the city.

Cycling is not only environmentally friendly - it is simply the easiest way to get around. Children cycle to school, professionals cycle to work, and families use cargo bikes to transport groceries and even young children.

Visitors are often surprised by how naturally cycling fits into everyday life. It reflects a culture that values practicality, sustainability and healthy living.

Work-Life Balance
Danes believe that life should not revolve entirely around work.

Most people leave work at a reasonable hour to spend time with family, friends or hobbies. Evenings are often reserved for cooking together, sharing meals or relaxing at home.

Weekends are equally important, providing opportunities to explore nature, visit friends or simply enjoy doing very little at all.

This balance between work and personal life contributes to Denmark's reputation as one of the happiest countries in the world.

Food Brings People Together
Meals are more than nourishment - they are social occasions. Whether it's a long brunch with friends, traditional smørrebrød for lunch or dinner with family, food plays an important role in bringing people together.



Coffee is equally important. Danish cafés are rarely places to grab a quick drink and leave. Instead, they invite visitors to slow down, relax and enjoy conversation.

The Danish Design Philosophy
Danish design is recognised around the world for its clean lines, natural materials and timeless elegance.

Rather than being decorative for its own sake, Danish design focuses on creating beautiful objects that are practical, durable and comfortable to use. This philosophy extends beyond furniture into architecture, fashion and everyday living.
It perfectly reflects the Danish belief that beauty should also be functional.

Happiness in Everyday Moments
Perhaps the biggest surprise for many visitors is that Danish happiness rarely comes from spectacular experiences.