

# The splendor and rich heritage of Copenhagen

*Editor's Note: Go Travel is written by Charlie and Amber Price who are freelance travel writers from Edmond. They explore and explain in great detail what they find in their journeys. If you would like to read the rest of this travel story, the full version is on our web site at [www.edmondpa.com](http://www.edmondpa.com). Just click on the Go Travel button under the Travel Gallery heading.*

**By Charlie and Amber Price**

According to Shakespeare, something is rotten in the state of Denmark. But after spending a few days in the country's capital city of Copenhagen, we sure couldn't find it. Packed with interesting sites, entertaining diversions and friendly people, this hip Scandinavian capital is a joy for tourists.

Founded in 1167, Copenhagen has served as the capital city of the self-styled world's oldest kingdom since 1417. A big city with a small-town feel, Copenhagen can keep even the hard-to-please traveler busy for two or three days.

Any first-time visit to Copenhagen should include a tour of Christiansborg Palace. Visitors must wear slippers over their shoes to protect the floors and carpets of the grand royal reception rooms included in the tour. Two rooms, the queen's private library and the great hall, are the highlight of the tour. Bright and airy, the library's rows of books and high ceilings create a lovely room, and any Danish citizen can check out a book. The great hall is decorated with modern tapestries depicting more than 1,000 years of Danish history. A gift to the queen on her 50th birthday, the tapestries were finally completed and presented to the queen 10 years later in 2000. With bright, vibrant colors virtually bursting from the fabric, the tapestries tell a compelling story.

The Danish Parliament is also housed in Christiansborg Palace and the free tour of its chambers is well worth the time.

To visit Copenhagen's coolest hangout, head to the Nyhavn Canal. Built as a trading harbor in the 1670s, Nyhavn's picturesque buildings now house restaurants, cafes



**The magnificent Christiansborg Palace**

and clubs. A great place to sit and watch Copenhagen go by, Nyhavn is also a handy location to catch a boat tour of the city, a relaxing way to explore Copenhagen's harbor and canals.

Although she's the symbol of the city, Hans Christian Andersen's Little Mermaid is little more than a small statue on a rock in the harbor. While not hard to find, she's a little out of the way. Many of the city cruises will take you by the love-lorn maiden, but if you just have to see her up close, swing by on your way to the Museum of Danish Resistance.

Chronicling the underground fight against Nazi occupation, the Museum of Danish Resistance tells the story of Danish life during five years of German rule. The small museum weaves its compelling tale with photographs, uniforms, propaganda pieces, hidden radios, secret printing presses and sabotage devices.

More ancient Danish history is on display at the 17th-century Rosenborg Castle. My wife and I chose to see the site with tour guide Richard Karpen. Karpen's interesting and informative commentary added immensely to our enjoyment of what could have been "just another castle." Karpen's tour concluded in the Treasury with a thorough lesson on the Danish crown jewels.

Many other worthwhile tourists sites, including churches, fountains and city squares, can be found scattered among the retail shops on

Copenhagen's shopping street, Strtget. Claiming the mantle of Europe's longest pedestrian shopping street, Strtget overflows with tourists, shops and street performers.

Twisting high above the nearby Christianshavn neighborhood, the spire of Our Savior's Church challenges brave tourists to scale its exterior or spiral staircase for breathtaking views over the urban Danish landscape. Constructed in 1752, tourists climb the oak spire's 400 steps, the last 150 on its exterior, to reach the summit which is almost 300 feet above the ground. The dizzying climb is well worth the effort for its butterflies-in-your-stomach uniqueness.

Also in Christianshavn near Our Savior's Church is Christiania, Copenhagen's "freetown."

A collection of tired-looking homes, shops and artists' studios, Christiania was founded in the early 1970s reportedly as an alternative to formal Danish society. According to Christiania's Guide, "There are four unbreakable rules in Christiania: no hard drugs, rocker badges, weapons and violence."

A short walk along Christiania's main drag, called Pusher Street, left us feeling more than a little out of our element. While a peace-and-love,

flower-power child of the 1960s might see this hippie haven as a trip (pun intended) down memory lane, Christiania was not my bag, baby. I'm no prude - live and let live I say - but there are better ways to spend your time in Copenhagen.

If all that Christiania counterculture works up an appetite, stop in at the Lagkagehuset bakery for a Danish danish. The stuff of culinary vacation fantasy, its most perfect offering is appropriately called Dream Cake.

For more substantial fare, grab a table at the Kobenhavner Cafeen. Located just a few blocks off the busy Strtget, the quaint restaurant is decorated with scenes of old Copenhagen and photos of the royal family. Try the delicious Dansk hakkebrf me blrte lrg spejF rugbrrd, which is Danish minced beefsteak and onions topped with a fried egg and served with rye bread. The restaurant also serves wonderful schnitzel.

We called the Hotel Bethel Srmandshjem our home for two Scandinavian nights. Built in the middle of the action on the Nyhavn Canal, the former sailors' hostel is superbly located, close to many of the city's tourist destinations and restaurants. The hotel also has handy access to public transportation with the Kongens Nytorv bus stop and subway station only a short walk away.

A European city is never more vibrant and alive than during a festival, and we scheduled our visit to coincide with Copenhagen's famous jazz festival.

With venues in several locations among the city's parks and squares, the concerts are free and highly enjoyable. The festival is a great time to visit Copenhagen. The city may be a bit crowded, but the festive atmosphere more than makes up for the influx of visitors.

Steeped in Nordic history but with a vibe all its own, Copenhagen gets my vote as the best of Scandinavia's capital cities. ♥

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