

# DENMARK

*"Going on this experience made me get a new perspective about my home country and the world. And I think the difficulties, the differences and the travels I went through made me a stronger person. Now my heart is in two places. I have a second home in Denmark and families and friends there whom I will cherish for a long time." Atinoot Tanparn, participant from Thailand, 2003-2004.*

*"All roads lead to...Denmark! "It is almost eleven years ago I came to Denmark for the very first time. I applied for an AFS exchange-student program, not knowing much where to go. I ended up in a tiny village on the island of Sealand having an unforgettable experience. Today, I find myself with a job in a Danish consulting company, doing what I love, keeping up my Danish and learning from yet another fantastic place in the world!" Mauro Lucardi, architect, participant from Argentina, 1991-92*

Denmark, a nation of 406 islands, has less poverty and a narrower disparity between rich and poor than any other country in the European Union. In part, this is because its citizens pay the world's highest taxes, for which they receive lifelong social security, state-supported medical care and excellent education. Relaxed, tolerant and sophisticated, the Danes welcome all visitors and are avid consumers of world culture. Significantly, Denmark's publishers produce 12,000 new books a year, an astonishing output for a population of only 5.5 million.

## **Community Service Program**

AFS's Community Service program gives you the opportunity to share in and contribute to the life of a community in Denmark by living and working alongside its members in a community-based service organization. At the organization, you will be asked to pitch in and offer assistance in whatever capacity might be needed and to share the knowledge and experience you have gained from your home culture in the process. No one expects you to be an expert with all the answers to local problems or the ability to change local conditions. Rather, you are expected to be a willing participant in a process of mutual discovery. This experience will present you with innumerable learning opportunities both personally and professionally.

Worldwide, AFS Community Service program participants contribute their talents and energies to a variety of social programs that range from protecting the environment to teaching children or adults, from assisting the elderly and the disabled to defending human rights, from enhancing public health to helping local businesses become established.

Past Community Service participants in Denmark have been involved mainly in educational projects in environment. However, all specifics—including assignments, orientations, logistics and activities—vary depending on the program cycle.

## **AFS & Your Experience**

In 1957, Danish program alumni founded AFS Denmark as the American Field Service in Denmark. Current members (approximately 2,000) are former AFSers, host parents and other people interested in the ideas of AFS. AFS Denmark has a national Board of Directors and more than 50 Chapters throughout Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

AFS will be at your side throughout your intercultural exchange. Even before leaving your home country, you will participate in organized AFS orientations and have the assistance of experienced AFS volunteers. Once in your host country, you can rely on your local volunteer contact and other chapter volunteers to support you in your experience. Together we will ensure that you have an incredible experience abroad.

## **Orientations**

Participants are met at the arrival airport by AFS Denmark volunteers who escort them to a two- to-three-day cultural orientation in Copenhagen. Afterward, participants travel typically by train to their placement communities, which are suburban or rural.

In addition to an orientation at your arrival, AFS Denmark will provide you with several others. AFS orientations offer participants a chance to meet for several days and talk about expectations for the future program and past experiences. Orientations involve participating in group activities and self-examination. Sessions also provide language training as well as new information and ways of looking at things, while also allowing participants to share points of view. AFS orientations are social, interactive and educational, bringing together people from many countries and helping them to better understand their own intercultural learning experiences while preparing them to handle their community service assignments.

## **Living in Denmark**

### **Living arrangements**

Some participants in AFS Community Service programs live with local families, sharing their daily lives, their meals and perhaps a host sibling's bedroom. Other participants live where their community service organization conducts its business. Still others live in rooms provided elsewhere by their local service organizations.

### **Diet and Meals**

Traditional open-faced sandwiches known as *smørrebrød* are popular. Dinner usually includes meat or fish, potatoes, rice or pasta and vegetables. Sometimes dessert is served. Staples of the Danish diet include roast pork, fish, beans, brussels sprouts, fresh vegetables and grains. Vegetarianism is extremely rare, making vegetarians difficult to place.

The evening meal is usually the main meal of the day. It is served between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. and is often a time when families get together.

Danes tend to eat meals rather than snack from the refrigerator. Food in the refrigerator is not necessarily available for general consumption. If you live with a family and want a snack, always check whether it is all right for you to eat something from the fridge.

### **Health Precautions**

AFS suggests that you discuss the health recommendations for Denmark (which you can get from your government or find easily on the Internet) with your doctor at home, to determine what is best for you and your personal needs.

If you require any medical assistance during your stay, your host family or local volunteers will be ready to help find it. As an AFS participant, your medical expenses are covered for illness or injuries incurred while on the program, exclusive of pre-existing, dental or visual aid expenses.

### **Safety and Support**

During your stay, local AFS volunteers will be available to assist you as you learn to live as a Dane. In the event of an emergency, AFS staff can be reached 24 hours a day by you in your host country and by your natural family at home.

### **Travel**

AFS's Community Service programs allow participants to travel on their own through their host countries, typically for a week or more, to explore and absorb each country's cultural diversity.

### **Documents**

You must have a passport that will be valid for six months longer than your intended stay. In addition to your passport, you also need a visa to enter and reside in your host country. Visas are obtained through the consular offices in your region and requirements often vary from consulate to consulate.

Consulates charge fees for their services, and obtaining your visa can be a complicated and lengthy process requiring a great deal of paperwork, patience and persistence. It is your responsibility to obtain your visa and pay the fees. However, AFS will let you know how to proceed and will provide you with the documents you need to apply for the visa.

## Program Prices

All participants are required to pay participation fee and do a mandatory fundraising. To get further information, please visit our website [www.afscanada.org](http://www.afscanada.org) or contact us.

The program price covers the following: round-trip international travel with your AFS group; travel in the host country to your host family; travel from your host family to your international departure point; AFS's medical plan; placement with your host; orientation in your home country and your host country; 24 hour emergency assistance in your home and host countries; a global medical assistance organization to support extreme emergencies; a network of trained volunteers who support you throughout your experience.

In order to keep costs low and provide good service, AFS utilizes a network of volunteers and staff in 50+ countries around the world. Volunteers need training, support and assistance from professional staff in each country. Other expenses you will normally need to pay in addition to the program price: passport and visa fees, required inoculations, expenses for eyeglasses, contacts and dental care, school uniforms (where applicable) and personal spending money. Your housing and food are provided by your host family as part of their commitment to our program.

## Country Information

### Geography and Climate

Denmark is about the size of the U.S. state of Massachusetts or the Dominican Republic and is made up of the Jutland peninsula and small islands in the North and Baltic Seas. It lies to the north of Germany and south of Sweden across a strait joining the Baltic Sea to the North Sea. The land is relatively flat with some hills and is made up of moors, lakes, farmlands and woodlands.

Denmark's climate can be unpredictable, and skies are often overcast. Despite the influence of the western trade winds off the north Atlantic, which are warmed by the Gulf Stream, the weather is often windy, and winters can be quite cold. January temperatures average about -1°C (30°F), and July warms to about 18°C (65°F).

Greenland is the largest island in the world. It is a part of Denmark, but its home government handles all internal affairs. Most of Greenland is covered by glaciers, and its climate is mostly arctic.

The Faroe Islands are located in the north Atlantic about 1,200 km (800 mi) from Denmark. They enjoy home rule within the Kingdom of Denmark. The islands are volcanic in origin, and the climate is typically oceanic: stormy, changeable and wet.

### Population

Denmark has a population of 5.3 million.

### Language

Danish is Denmark's official language. In Greenland, the predominant language is Greenlandic, which is closely related to languages spoken by the Inuits of northern Canada, Alaska and Siberia.

### Government

Denmark is a constitutional monarchy. Legislative authority is held jointly by the sovereign and the parliament, or *Folketing*. The Folketing consists of 179 members who serve four-year terms.

### Religion

Most Danes belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, but only about 5% of them actively attend services.

## Launching your AFS experience

Evaluations by previous participants support our belief that if you prepare prior to leaving, you will have the best experience.

Make every effort to improve your Danish language skills before departure. Then, to familiarize yourself with life in Denmark, visit your local library or search the Internet. AFS International's website, [AFS.org](http://AFS.org), provides links to websites for each participating country.

Although every participant's experience is unique, we strongly suggest that you speak with a recent AFS participant to Denmark. This veteran will be an excellent resource regarding living and working there. If you do not know a veteran, please contact your local AFS volunteer or AFS Interculture Canada office.

In addition, AFS will provide you with essential information about your host country to prepare you for immersion in a new and exciting culture.

Finally, Danes will be curious about your home community. You may be surprised how much they already know about your country's history and politics. Therefore, you will find it helpful to be informed about current events in your home community and country.

### **How to Apply?**

You first have to fill out the Preliminary Application form that you can find on our website at [www.afscanada.org](http://www.afscanada.org). If you don't have access to Internet, call us at (514) 288-3282 or 1-800-361-7248 and we will send you the document by mail.

### **Quick Facts**

Country data	Size	43,094 km <sup>2</sup> (16,634 mi <sup>2</sup> )
	Population	5,336,394
	Official language	Danish
	Government	Constitutional monarchy
	Currency	Danish krone (DKr) = 100 oere
Useful website	<a href="http://www.denmark.dk">http://www.denmark.dk</a>	
AFS Denmark website	<a href="http://www.afs.dk">www.afs.dk</a>	