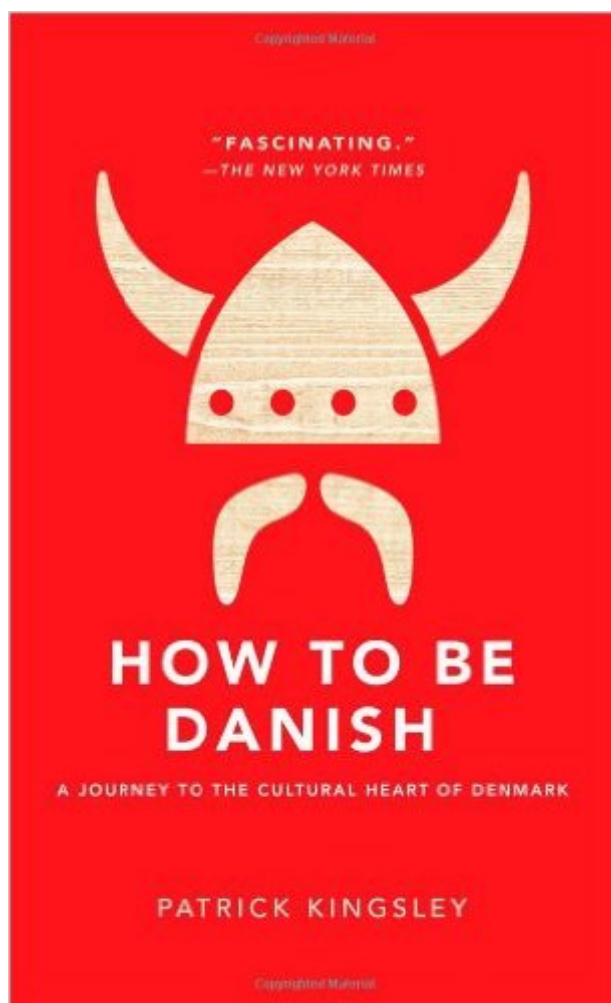


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How To Be Danish: A Journey To The Cultural Heart Of Denmark



Synopsis

Part reportage, part travelogue, this is a fascinating introduction to contemporary Danish culture for anyone who wants to know more about the world's happiest nation. Denmark is the country of the moment. Recently named the happiest nation in the world, it's the home of Noma, the world's best (and most eccentric) restaurant. We wear their sweaters, watch their thrillers, and covet their cool modern design, but how much do we really know about the Danes themselves? Part reportage, part travelogue, this fills in the gaps — an introduction to contemporary Danish culture that spans politics, television, food, architecture, and design.

Book Information

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Atria Books/Marble Arch Press; First Edition edition (February 4, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1476755485

ISBN-13: 978-1476755489

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (23 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #82,828 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in Books > History > Europe > Scandinavia > Denmark #84 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Customs & Traditions #123 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Human Geography

Customer Reviews

Brief, lively, very readable book. Yet still provides plenty of substance about the origins and contradictions of the mysterious alternate universe called Denmark. This is a country so cooperative that -- thanks to strong unions and a redistributive tax system -- doctors and lawyers average less than twice a garbage collector's salary. Statistically, it's the most egalitarian country on the planet. But despite the very generous welfare state, many immigrant refugees feel isolated and excluded. There's a 180% excise tax on buying a car, and some 2/3 of trips in København (a/k/a "Copenhagen," don't call it Frisco) are reportedly made by bicycle. Yet Denmark's deeply ingrained green culture -- bike lanes everywhere, pedestrianized streets, neighborhoods centrally heated for efficiency, and manufacture of about half the world's wind turbines -- dates only to the 1970s. It was a small, resource-poor nation's pragmatic response to getting whacked by that decade's oil-price shocks. Danes are ruthlessly committed to honesty. They'll meticulously avoid giving you a bad deal,

or selling you any product they don't have faith in, or withholding information. But they'll also stare at you disapprovingly -- and cops will swiftly give you a ticket -- for jaywalking on a street with zero traffic. Danes are stereotyped as Scandinavia's most outgoing people, and Denmark frequently leads international surveys (and definitely Disneyland) as "the happiest place on Earth." But interviewees clarify that they're really more like "content." And let's face it, Sweden is more fun. (More competition, lower prices, greater acceptance of foreign transplants, and you bet it's OK to jaywalk politely.)

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