

North Zealand



Once you've exhausted the delights of Copenhagen, make super-accessible North Zealand your next stop. All of Denmark's most typical attractions – golden-sand beaches, behemoth castles, impressive Viking remains – are crammed into this small, sweet, seaside area.

Lively Helsingør is one of the region's biggest towns and home to the mighty Kronborg Slot, an absolute beast of a castle. Between Copenhagen and Helsingør, two cultural pearls lie waiting on the coast. Fans of Karen Blixen's weird, witty short stories should make the pilgrimage to Rungsted, a museum dedicated to her memory. Of wider interest is the outstanding Louisiana, an amazing modern-art gallery overlooking the ocean. Trust us, even philistines will grunt in appreciation.

As you continue round the top of Zealand, beach-lovers should head for the excellent stretches of seaside at Hornbæk and Tisvildeleje, which both have Blue Flag eco-awards. Fairytale Frederiksborg Slot in Hillerød is a must-see, with coppery turrets sprouting from an island in the middle of a glinting lake, and rooms bursting with over-the-top Renaissance splendour. Fredensborg Slot is still inhabited by Danish royalty, but its huge lakeside gardens are open to guests and it's fun to watch the changing of the Toytown-like guard.

Fans of those indomitable Norse traders and raiders can't miss Roskilde. Here you'll find the superb waterside Viking Ship Museum and Denmark's finest cathedral, which is a Unesco World Heritage Site and the resting place of Danish royals. The region is very easy to get around, and (bonus!) the Copenhagen Card allows free public transport and admission to most attractions – what's not to love?

HIGHLIGHTS

- Are you in Denmark or the south of France? Ponder the question on the wide golden beach at **Hornbæk** (p126)
- Marvel at the immense seashore bastion **Kronborg Slot**, the setting for Shakespeare's Hamlet (p117)
- Continue the castle odyssey at beautiful **Frederiksborg Slot** (p122), balancing across three islands in an idyllic lake
- Let your child run free with an axe at the Iron Age settlement at **Lejre** (p135)
- Party at northern Europe's largest rock music event in **Roskilde** (p135)



Getting There & Away

Most of North Zealand can be reached from Copenhagen in less than an hour – quicker if you have your own transport. The Copenhagen Card (see p111) can be used for many bus or train trips in the area.

Frequent trains head northwards from Copenhagen, but take bus 388 from Klampenborg (the last stop on C or F line of the S-train system) north to Helsingør for beautiful coastal views. Helsingør train station handles both DSB trains and the privately operated HHGB, which runs a regional service in North Zealand.

Getting Around

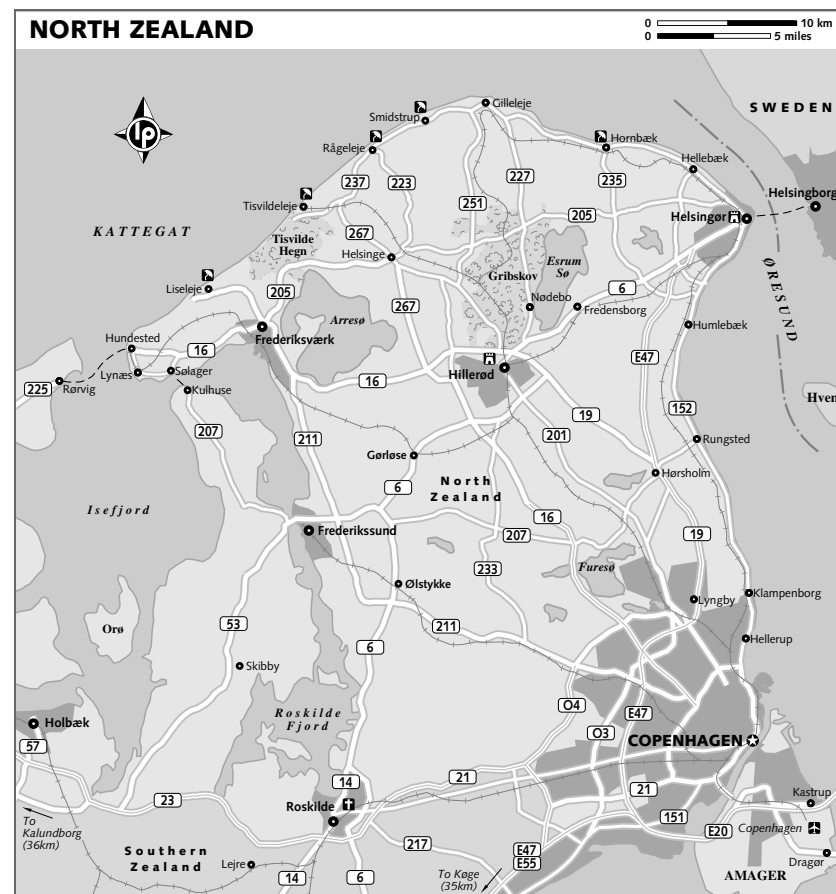
A joint zone fare system (19kr per zone travelled) embraces all HT/Copenhagen Transport

buses and DSB/State Railway and S-trains in Metropolitan Copenhagen and North Zealand as well as some privately operated railway routes in the area (within an approximately 40km radius of Copenhagen). It's possible to change between train and bus routes on the same ticket.

To reach most of the north coast you must switch trains in either Hillerød or Helsingør.

ØRESUND COAST

This area is sometimes grandly referred to as the Danish Riviera, thanks to its expensive seaside mansions. However, it's a slightly misleading name – if you're dreaming of golden



beaches, head for the north coast. The main attractions on North Zealand's eastern shore are two excellent museums, and the town of Helsingør, famous for its beast of a castle, Kronborg Slot.

The Øresund itself is the sound that separates Denmark from Sweden, just across the water. The annual Round Zealand yacht race, one of the world's largest, takes place here in mid-June.

RUNGSTED

If you're a fan of the fantastical, erotic, mordant writings of Karen Blixen (1885–1962), the coastal town of Rungsted holds a treat. Here you can visit Rungstedlund, Blixen's Danish estate, now a museum dedicated to her life and work.

Karen Blixen Museet

Karen Blixen's former home in Rungsted is now the **Karen Blixen museum** (☎ 45 57 10 57; www.karen-blixen.dk; Rungsted Strandvej 111; adult/under 14 45kr/free; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun May–Sep, 1–4pm Wed–Fri & 11am–4pm Sat & Sun Oct–Apr). Fans of her writing will appreciate how it remains much the way she left it with photographs, Masai spears, paintings, shields and other mementoes of her time in Africa, such as the gramophone given to Blixen by her lover Denys Finch-Hatton. On her desk is the old Corona typewriter she used to write her novels.

One wing of the museum houses a library of Blixen's books, a café, bookshop and an audio-visual presentation on her life. The wooded grounds, set aside as a bird sanctuary, contain Blixen's **grave**, a simple stone slab inscribed with her name.

The museum is opposite the busy yacht harbour, 1.5km from the train station. Walk north up Stationsvej, turn right at the lights onto Rungstedvej and then, at its intersection with Rungsted Strandvej, walk south about 300m.

Getting There & Away

Trains to Rungsted run every 30 minutes from Copenhagen (66.50kr, 35 minutes) and Helsingør (47.50kr, 30 minutes).

HUMLEBÆK

pop 8933

Visitors come to the small coastal town of Humlebæk for one thing: the modern-art museum Louisiana.

Louisiana

Even if you don't have a consuming passion for modern art, Denmark's renowned **Louisiana** (☎ 49 19 07 19; www.louisiana.dk; Gammel Strandvej 13; adult/student/under 18 80/70kr/free; ☎ 10am–5pm Thu–Tue, 10am–10pm Wed; ☎) is definitely worth visiting. This striking modernist gallery is made up of four huge wings, which sprawl across a sculpture-filled park, burrowing down into the hillside and nosing out again to wink at the sea.

The museum's permanent collection, mainly postwar paintings and graphic art, is creatively displayed. There are sections on constructivism, CoBrA movement artists, minimalist art, abstract expressionism, pop art and staged photography. Pablo Picasso, Francis Bacon and Alberto Giacometti are some of the international luminaries you'll come across inside, while Henry Moore's monumental bronzes and Max Ernst's owl-eyed animals lurk between the hillocks of the garden. Prominent Danish artists include Asger Jorn, Carl-Henning Pedersen, Robert Jacobsen and Richard Mortensen. Six to eight temporary exhibitions take place each year, often with supporting films and concerts.

Kids are spoiled with an entire wing of their own, where they can create masterpieces inspired by the gallery's exhibitions, using everything from crayons to interactive computers. Louisiana's artsy café, with its large sunny terrace and sea views, is a great place for a reviving coffee. A two-storey shop offers art books, prints and Scandinavian design.

Louisiana is 1.5km from Humlebæk train station, a 15-minute signposted walk along Gammel Strandvej. Accessibility for people in wheelchairs at the museum is very good.

Getting There & Away

Trains to Humlebæk run roughly every 30 minutes from Copenhagen (66.50kr, 50 minutes) and Helsingør (28.50kr, 13 minutes).

HELINGØR

pop 35,075

The main sight at the busy port town of Helsingør (Elsinore) is imposing Kronborg Slot, a brute of a castle that dominates the narrowest point of the Øresund. It was made famous as Elsinore Castle in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, although the intimate psychological nature of the play is a far cry from the military colossus squatting on the shore.

OUT OF RUNGSTED

Karen Blixen (1885–1962) was born in Rungsted, a well-to-do community north of Copenhagen, as Karen Christenze Dinesen. Throughout her life, this unusual woman created an aura of eccentricity around herself, trying on different names, fictionalising her own life, and causing controversy with her 'decadent' writings.

In 1914, when she was 28 and eager to escape from the confines of her bourgeois family, she married her second cousin Baron Bror von Blixen-Finecke, after having a failed love affair with his twin brother Hans. It was a marriage of convenience – she wanted his title and he needed her money.

The couple moved to Kenya and started a coffee plantation, which Karen was left to manage. It was here that she was diagnosed with syphilis, contracted through the womanising baron (although it's possible that her ill health was caused by arsenic poisoning, taken as medicine for the syphilis she feared she had). The diagnosis was especially damaging psychologically since her father had committed suicide after contracting syphilis when Karen was 10 years old. Blixen came home to Denmark for medical treatment, then returned to Africa and divorced the baron in 1925.

She then lived with the great love of her life, Englishman Denys Finch-Hatton, for six years, until he died in a tragic plane crash in 1932. The couple were played by Meryl Streep and Robert Redford in the Oscar-winning film adaptation of *Out of Africa*, Blixen's autobiography. Soon after this Blixen left Africa, returning to the family estate in Rungsted where she began to write. Denmark was slow to appreciate her, in part because she used an old-fashioned idiomatic style, consistently wrote about the aristocracy in approving terms and insisted on being addressed as 'Baroness' in a country bent on minimising class disparity.

Following rejection by publishers in Denmark and England, Blixen's first book of short stories, *Seven Gothic Tales*, was published in New York in 1934 under the pseudonym Isak Dinesen. It was only after the book became immensely successful in the USA that Danish publishers took a serious interest.

After the commercial success of *Out of Africa* in both Danish and English, other books followed: *Winter's Tales* (1942), *The Angelic Avengers* (1944), *Last Tales* (1957), *Anecdotes of Destiny* (1958) and *Shadows on the Grass* (1960). Another Oscar-winning film, *Babette's Feast*, was based on her story about culinary artistry in small-town Denmark (see p45).

Helsingør is full of pedestrianised historic streets, just made for ambling along with an ice cream. They contain a delightful collection of half-timbered houses, Gothic churches and a medieval cloister, interspersed with interesting shops and good cafés.

Frequent ferries shuttle to and from Sweden, filled with Swedes on a mission to buy cheap (at least for them) Danish alcohol.

Information

Danske Bank (☎ 49 25 52 00; Stengade 55; ☎ 9.30am–4pm Mon–Fri, to 6pm Thu) One of many banks and ATMs.

Helsingør Turistbureau (☎ 49 21 13 33; www.visithelsingor.dk; Havnepladsen 3; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri & 10am–3pm Sat mid–Jun–Aug, 10am–4pm Mon–Fri & 10am–1pm Sat Sep–mid–Jun) Opposite the train station.

Library (☎ 49 28 36 20; Marienlyst Allé 4; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat) Free internet access.

Post office (☎ 80 20 70 30; Stjernegade 15; ☎ 10am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm Sat)

Sights

KRONBORG SLOT

The monstrous military bulk of **Kronborg Slot** (☎ 49 21 30 78; www.kronborgcastle.com; Kronborgvej; adult/15–18yr/6–14yr Royal Apts, Casements & Chapel & Maritime Museum 85/60/15kr, Royal Apts & Casements & Chapel 60/60/15kr, Casements & Chapel 30/30/10kr, Maritime Museum 50kr/free/free; ☎ 10.30am–5pm May–Sep, 11am–4pm Tue–Sun Apr & Oct, 11am–3pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar) is a Unesco World Heritage Site, and top of the town's sightseeing list. Despite the attention it has received as the setting of *Hamlet*, the castle's real function was far less romantic – it acted as a formidable tollhouse. Imagine sitting in the Øresund with the cannons of Kronborg aimed squarely at your creaking ship, and you can understand how wonderfully effective the castle was in its tax-gathering purpose.

Although it costs to enter the interior, you can cross several swan-filled moats and walk into the dramatic courtyard free of charge;

or make a circumnavigation of the castle's mighty sea barriers (open daily until sunset), a good picnic spot.

History

The Danish king Erik of Pomerania demonstrated excellent business sense in the 1420s, when he built a small fortress, Krogen, at the narrowest part of the Øresund and then charged cargo ships one rose noble (a type of English gold coin) for sailing past. The 'sound dues' generated plenty of cash, enabling Frederik II to enlarge Krogen into Kronborg Slot in 1585.

Not long after the workmen had packed up tools, a devastating fire ravaged the castle in 1629, leaving nothing but the outer walls. The tireless builder-king Christian IV rebuilt Kron-

borg, preserving the castle's earlier Renaissance style and adding his own Baroque touches; but soon afterwards disaster struck again. During the Danish-Swedish wars, the Swedes occupied Kronborg from 1658 to 1660, looting everything of value including its famous fountain.

Following the Swedish attack, Christian V bulked up Kronborg's defences, but the Danish royals gave up trying to make the castle a home. The building became a barracks from 1785 until 1924, when it became a museum (the Swedish government sportingly returning some looted items).

Royal Apartments

The Royal Apartments are rather echoey and empty today: the king's and queen's chambers,

for example, have little in them but marble fireplaces, a few sticks of furniture, and some lavish ceiling paintings, although occasional modern-art exhibitions add an interesting dimension.

The most impressive room is the ballroom, the longest in Scandinavia when it was built in 1585. Banquets held here consisted of 65 courses, and each guest was given their own vomiting bucket. Seven of the tapestries that originally adorned the walls – in excellent condition, and with interesting explanations alongside – can be seen in the adjoining Little Hall.

Casements & Chapel

The chill, low-ceilinged dungeon, which also served as storerooms and soldiers' quarters, stretches underneath a surprisingly large area of the castle. It's suitably dark and creepy, although you'll make better sense of its empty rooms if you read up on barrack's life before heading downwards. Delights include nesting bats, and a statue of the Viking chief **Holger Danske** (Ogier the Dane), who, legend says, will wake and come to Denmark's aid in its hour of need.

The galleried chapel was the only part of Kronborg that escaped the flames in 1629, and gives a good impression of the castle's original appearance. Highlights include the gilt-covered altar and freakish faces decorating the pews.

Maritime Museum

Tracing Denmark's maritime past and overseas colonies, **Handels- og Søfartsmuseet** (Danish Maritime Museum; ☎ 49 21 06 85; www.maritime-museum.dk), running round three whole sides of the

courtyard, is worth a visit. This collection of model ships, paintings, nautical instruments and sea charts helps one to appreciate the impact of the sea on Danish culture and history. It also contains the world's oldest ship biscuit, c 1852 – which looks peculiarly edible.

You can see the remains of the original Krogen fortress in the masonry of rooms 21 and 22; and it's worth the admission price to climb the winding staircase of the teetering **Telegraph Tower** for superb views.

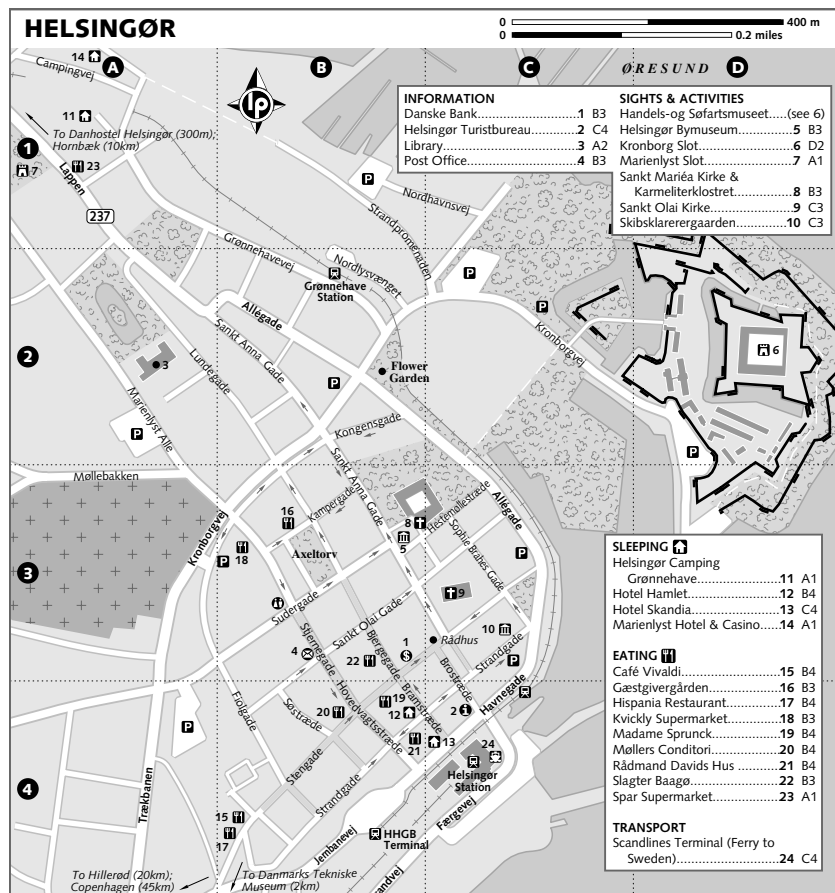
SANKT MARIÆ KIRKE & KARMELITERKLOSTRET

The medieval church of **Sankt Mariæ Kirke** (☎ 49 21 17 74; www.sctmariae.dk; Sankt Anna Gade 38; ☎ 10am-3pm mid-Jun–mid-Sep, 10am-2pm mid-Sep–mid-Jun) contains some spiffy 15th-century frescoes. Alongside standard biblical scenes are bizarre faces from whose mouths spring frogs, foxes, bulls and rams; while in the southern aisle pipers and lute players burst from giant flowers. There's also an ornate rococo gallery and a 17th-century organ played by Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707), a Baroque composer who greatly influenced Bach; frequent organ concerts are attended by aficionados.

Sankt Mariæ Kirke is attached to one of Scandinavia's best-preserved medieval monasteries, **Karmeliterklostret** (Carmelite monastery; details as Sankt Mariæ Kirke), a soothing place of red brick and whitewash. Christian II's mistress, Dyveke (c 1490–1517), is thought to have been buried here.

SANKT OLAI KIRKE

Surrounded by lime trees, **Sankt Olai Kirke** (☎ 49 21 04 43; Sankt Anna Gade 12; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm



TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602) is set in Kronborg Slot in Helsingør ('Elsinore'). Despite the vividness of the play, the Bard had never set foot in Denmark. It's possible that he gleaned details of the imposing new castle from a group of English players who performed in Helsingør in 1585, the year that Kronborg was completed. Shakespeare also included two actual Danish noblemen, Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstjerne (Guildenstern), who visited the English court in the 1590s.

Although the remaining characters are based on a story that was 800 years old in Shakespeare's time, audiences were utterly convinced of the play's authenticity. English merchants trading in Helsingør would visit the castle out of respect for Hamlet: so many visitors wanted to know where the indecisive Dane was buried that 'Hamlet's grave' was built in the grounds of Marienlyst Slot.

Performances of *Hamlet* take place in Kronborg's courtyard every August, from straight-up RSC versions to Chinese-opera interpretations – check out www.hamletssommer.dk to see what's coming up.

May-Aug, 10am-2pm Sep-Apr) is a handsome red-brick Gothic cathedral built in 1559. Unusual features include an over-the-top white-and-gold altarpiece (one of Denmark's largest at 12m high), an ominous black stone slab where the names of wrong-doers were written, and, wedged in an archway, an English cannonball fired on route to the Battle of Copenhagen (1801).

MARIENLYST SLOT

About 1.5km northwest of town is **Marienlyst Slot** (☎ 49 28 18 30; Marienlyst Allé 32; adult/student/child 30/20kr/free; ☎ noon-4pm), a stately neoclassical manor house built in 1763, set back in a manicured garden ablaze with rhododendrons. Inside there's a small collection of silverware and 19th-century paintings of Helsingør and Hornbæk, including one on the 2nd floor that's half Venice and half Copenhagen.

'Hamlet's grave' can be found in the parkland behind the house, added because every good romantic garden should provoke melancholic thoughts; and as a tourist attraction for visiting English merchants convinced that Hamlet was real.

The Hornbæk-bound train stops at Marienlyst station, 100m north of the manor house.

HELINGSØR BYMUSEUM

One block north of the cathedral is **Helsingør Bymuseum** (☎ 49 28 18 00; Sankt Anna Gade 36; adult/child 20kr/free; ☎ noon-4pm), built by the monks of the adjacent monastery in 1516 to serve as a sailors' hospital. There's a detailed model of 19th-century Helsingør, with an interesting 15-minute recording about the town's history in Danish, Swedish, German and English; and a hotchpotch of exhibits (old chemists' bottles, medieval pottery finds, 200 dolls) labelled mainly in Danish.

MUSEET SKIBSKLARERERGAARDEN

The higgledy-piggledy **shipping agent's house** (☎ 49 28 18 36; Strandgade 91; admission 30kr, entry by Danish guided tour only, on the hr; ☎ noon-4pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) is steeped in seafaring history: while the agent checked cargo and filled out paperwork in the office, ships' captains could stock up on supplies, have a meal, or catch four winks in the attic. Unfortunately the 50-minute tours are in Danish only; but pop into the spicy-smelling 18th-century shop, and buy a beer brewed in the tiny backyard.

DANMARKS TEKNISKE MUSEUM

Southwest of the centre on an industrial estate, **Danmarks Tekniske Museum** (☎ 49 22 26 11; www.tekniskmuseum.dk; Fabriksvej 25; adult/child 65kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚗) displays innovative technological inventions from the late 19th and early 20th centuries: early gramophones, radios, motor vehicles and aeroplanes. The latter includes a 1906 Danish-built aeroplane that, it's claimed, was the first plane flown in Europe (it stayed airborne for 11 seconds!). The museum is a 15-minute ride away on bus 805, in the direction of Espergerårde.

HAMMERMØLLEN

If you don't have a pressing itinerary, consider cycling to **Hammermøllen** (☎ 49 70 88 67; www.hammermollen.dk; Bøssemagergade 21; adult/child 10/5kr; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar), five kilometres west in Hellebæk. This picturesque old smithy was founded by Christian IV in 1765 to hammer out cannons for his battleships, and has also served as a copper mill and textile mill. Admire the thatched roof and water-wheels, and relax over coffee and cake.

Sleeping

Tourist office staff can book rooms in private homes for around 400kr, plus a 75kr booking fee.

Helsingør Camping Grønnehave (☎ 49 28 12 12; www.helsingorcamping.dk; Strandalleen 2; camp site per person 60kr; ☎ year-round; bus 340) A pleasant, low-key, two-star camping ground on the beach about 1.5km northwest of the town centre, Grønnehave has a shop, laundry, and bike hire for 75kr per day.

Danhostel Helsingør (☎ 49 21 16 40; www.helsingorhostel.dk; Nordre Strandvej 24; dm 150kr, r without/with bathroom 300/400kr; ☎ Feb-Nov) This 180-bed hostel is based in a coastal manor house 2km northwest of town, on a little beach looking directly across to Sweden. Dorms have up to 10 beds and are in one of the smaller attached buildings. Facilities include a small playground and outdoor ping-pong tables to keep kids amused; the self-catering kitchen, rather annoyingly, closes at 8pm. Bus 340 (19kr) gets you there.

Hotel Skandia (☎ 49 21 09 02; www.hotelskandia.dk; Bramstræde 5; s/d incl breakfast without bathroom 500/700kr, with bathroom 600/800kr; 🍷) The most affordable choice in town, Skandia has average-sized, averagely decorated doubles. Fourth-floor rooms have shared bathrooms, but you're

compensated by fantastic views of Kronborg, Sweden and the old town. There's also a small car park (20kr per 24 hours).

Hotel Hamlet (☎ 49 21 05 91; www.hotelhamlet.dk; Bramstræde 5; s/d 725/995kr) The other central option is Hotel Hamlet, which has 36 slightly old-fashioned rooms, done out in dark green and crisscrossed by beams. All have private bathrooms and TVs, and the hotel has an attached restaurant.

Marienlyst Hotel & Casino (☎ 49 21 40 00; www.marienlyst.dk; N Strandvej 2; s/d from 1425/1725kr; 🍷 🚗 🚗) Helsingør's four-star hotel stretches along the seafloor, and is practically a self-contained holiday centre, with two restaurants, bars, its own casino and a swimming pool. Rooms are tastefully neutral, with sleek white bathrooms; those with sea views cost around 150kr more.

Eating

There's a cluster of restaurants and beer gardens around the main square Axeltorv. For coffee and cake, head for pedestrianised Stengade.

Møllers Konditori (☎ 49 21 02 16; Stengade 39; ☎ 11.30am-5.30pm) Denmark's oldest konditori has outdoor seats on bustling Stengade, a prime site for people-watching. Nibble on succulent pastries, fresh bread rolls or sandwiches as you watch the passing crowds.

Café Vivaldi (☎ 49 26 00 38; Stengade 9; lunch/dinner mains 70/140kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) This popular, relaxed café is decorated in mock 'French bistro' style. The coffee's good, and the food tasty and modern. It ranges from nachos, omelettes, salads and quiches to more substantial evening mains – steaks, burritos and pasta dishes. Live music adds to the buzz at weekends.

Gæstgivergården (☎ 49 21 66 21; Kampergade 9; mains 79kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) A pub-like atmosphere with everything from burgers and salads to traditional Danish fare, including some good-value specials. There's often live music on Friday and Saturday nights.

our pick **Rådmand Davids Hus** (☎ 49 26 10 43; Strandgade 70; mains 80kr; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Thu, 10am-3am Fri & Sat) We loved this place, a popular café with sunny staff contained within a lopsided 17th-century half-timbered house. Traditional Danish food (nothing for vegies) is served up either in the cosy, crooked interior or the cobbled courtyard, bursting with greenery. The special is the 'shopping lunch' (75kr), typically a generous plate of

salad, salmon pâté, and slices of lamb, cheese and homemade ryebread.

Madame Sprunck (☎ 49 26 48 49; Stengade 48F; mains 92kr; ☎ 11.30am-midnight Sun-Thu, 11.30am-2am Fri & Sat) Another great old building, with seating in a candlelit wooden interior or charming mustard-yellow courtyard. Food is a mixture of Danish, French and Italian – everything from burgers to more sophisticated dishes such as salmon roe with red onions – and there's usually one vegetarian choice.

Hispania Restaurant (☎ 49 21 23 28; www.hispania-restaurant.com; Stengade 7; mains 125-150kr; ☎ dinner) For a change from open sandwiches, try this authentic Spanish restaurant. Indecisive eaters can nibble on tapas dishes, or go for meat and fish mains such as *albondigas* (Spanish meatballs), paella or stewed lamb, washed down with a bottle of Spanish wine. Eat in the snug, modernistic interior, or at one of the garden tables in summer.

Self-caterers and picnickers can pick fresh vegetable and meat dishes from the deli **Slagter Baagø** (☎ 49 21 11 84; Bjerregade 3; shrimp salad 45kr; ☎ 10am-6pm). There's a **Spar** (Lappen; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-7pm Fri, 7.30am-2pm Sat, 8am-noon Sun) supermarket near the hostel, and a **Kvickly** (Stjernegade 25; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) supermarket and bakery west of Axeltorv.

Getting There & Away

Helsingør train station has two adjacent terminals: the DSB terminal for national trains and the smaller Helsingør-Hornbæk-Gilleleje Banen (HHGB) terminal for the private railway that runs along the north coast.

DSB trains to Copenhagen (66.50kr, 55 minutes) run about three times hourly from early morning to around midnight, while DSB trains to Hillerød (57kr, 30 minutes) run at least once hourly until around midnight.

The HHGB train from Helsingør to Gilleleje (57kr, 40 minutes) via Hornbæk (25.50kr, 25 minutes) runs around twice hourly, with the last train pulling out of Helsingør at 10.55pm.

Helsingør is 64km north of Copenhagen and 24km northeast of Hillerød. There's free parking throughout the city, including north-east of the tourist office, west of Kvickly supermarket and outside Kronborg Slot.

For information on ferries to Helsingborg in Sweden (36kr return, 20 minutes), see p331.

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO TYCHO

It was on the island of Hven, in the sound between Denmark and Sweden, that the 16th-century Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe collected evidence that the sun and moon revolved around the earth. Although he was wrong – and proven so by Johannes Kepler, his former assistant – Brahe's observations and calculations were still significant achievements. He was the first to measure planetary movement, and designed instrumentation light years more sophisticated than his predecessors.

While Brahe's mind may have been on the stars, his ambitions were decidedly worldly. Part of his nose was sliced off in a duel, reputedly over claims that his opponent was a better mathematician. He subsequently replaced the damaged organ with a copper one.

To prevent Brahe from being lured away from Denmark, King Frederik II gave Hven to the astronomer and financed the building of Uraniborg, an observatory, alchemical laboratory and castle. After falling out with Frederik's son Christian IV, Brahe closed down the observatory in 1597, and left Denmark for good two years later.

Unfortunately his next appointment, as Imperial Mathematician to the Holy Roman Emperor, didn't last long – he died in Prague in 1601. It was long thought that his death was the result of holding in his urine for too long at a royal banquet, but recent investigations suggest that he may have died from mercury poisoning. One scurrilous theory is that Brahe was murdered by Kepler, who then made off with his life work...

In summer, it's possible to sail to Hven (now part of Sweden) from Helsingør on **Harald Blåtand** (☎ 21 29 25 21; www.sontshipping.dk in Danish; Kai 7, Havnegade) and visit the excellent Tycho Brahe museum. The boat sails at 9am from May to September, returning at 3pm. There's an extra sailing at noon, returning at 6pm, from June to August. A return ticket for the one-hour trip costs 170/140kr per adult/four-15 years.

INLAND TOWNS

In the heart of Zealand lie Hillerød and Fredensborg, two small towns built around magnificent – and very different – royal residences. You're free to roam the ornate rooms and soaring towers of the castle at Hillerød, whereas the interior of the more modest palace at Fredensborg is only open in July: the rest of the year, it's the beautiful lakeside gardens that are the main draw.

HILLERØD

pop 28,941

Christian IV sure knew how to build a castle. Hillerød, 30km north of Copenhagen, is a pleasant modern market town, whose glorious palace elevates it to 'must visit' status. Frederiksborg Slot, sitting on a nest of islands in the middle of an attractive lake, is a vision of copper turrets and Baroque gardens, and one of the most wowing attractions in the region.

Hillerød is also a transport hub for North Zealand, with train connections for the beaches on the north coast. The train station is about 500m from the town centre.

The **Hillerød Turistbureau** (☎ 48 24 26 26; www.hilleroedturist.dk; Christiansgade 1; ☎ 10.30am-5.30pm Mon-Wed,

10.30am-4.30pm Thu & Fri year-round, plus 10.30am-4pm Sat Jun-Aug) is inside the library, a short walk from the castle entrance.

Frederiksborg Slot

Combining history, beauty and strength, the impressive Dutch Renaissance-styled **Frederiksborg Slot** (☎ 48 26 04 39; www.frederiksborgslot.dk; Slotsgade 1; family/adult/student/6-15yr 120kr/60/50/15, 1¼hr audioguide 20kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 11am-3pm Nov-Mar) spreads across three islets on the castle lake, Slotsø.

HISTORY

The oldest part of Frederiksborg Slot dates from the reign of Frederik II, after whom it is named. His son Christian IV was born here; most of the present structure was built by Christian in the early 17th century and can be seen as his homage to a place to which he had a deep attachment. Both kings used Frederiksborg as their royal seat; but after Hillerød suffered plague, fire and rampaging Swedes during the 17th century, the throne moved to quieter Fredensborg (see p125) in the 18th century.

Frederiksborg Slot was ravaged by flames in 1859, and the royal family, unable to undertake the costly repairs, decided to give it up.

BRILLIANT BUILDER, FAULTY FIGHTER

No Danish monarch has made such a lasting impact on the Danish landscape as Christian IV (1577-1648). Many of Denmark's most lavish structures were erected during his reign and you'll find his fancy handiwork when touring Frederiksborg Slot and Kronborg Slot.

Christian inherited the throne in 1596 when he was just 11 years old and ruled for the next 60 years. The ambitious king established trading companies and a stock exchange, and built splendid new Renaissance cities, castles and fortresses throughout his kingdom.

Unfortunately, the king's foreign policies weren't nearly as brilliant as his domestic undertakings. In 1625 Christian IV dragged Denmark into the ill-fated Thirty Years' War with Sweden. By the end, Denmark was bankrupt and so much territory had been lost to Sweden that there were doubts Denmark would even survive as a nation. The king himself lost an eye to shrapnel when his flagship was attacked in battle – a vivid oil painting of that scene can be seen above Christian IV's crypt in Roskilde cathedral.

Carlsberg beer baron JC Jacobsen spearheaded a drive to restore the castle as a national museum, a function it fulfills today.

THE INTERIOR

The sprawling castle has a magnificent interior boasting gilded ceilings, wall-sized tapestries and fine paintings, with 70 of its rooms open to the public. **Slotskirken** (The Coronation Chapel) is the most dazzling. It was spared serious fire damage and retains the original interior commissioned by Christian IV – a crazed concoction of curling gold, pink-cheeked cherubs, and a silver pulpit and altarpiece. Danish monarchs were crowned in the chapel from 1671 to 1840, the perfect setting for such pomp and circumstance. You can hear the sound of the 17th century each Thursday between 1.30pm and 2pm, when the priceless **Compenius organ** (1610) is played, or at free concerts every Sunday at 5pm in July and August.

Also fairly intact is the **Audience Chamber**, an eye-boggling room containing trompe l'oeil details, a self-indulgent portrait of big-nosed Christian V posing as a Roman emperor, and best of all, a 17th-century elevator chair, which enabled the king to rise graciously through the floor!

Other rooms were restored to their original appearances in the 19th century. The richly embellished **Riddershalen** (Knights Hall), once the dining room, is particularly striking – check out the stucco friezes of deer, embedded with real antlers. Also impressive is the **Great Hall**, a vast ballroom complete with minstrels' gallery, fine tapestries and vivid ceiling paintings.

The rest of the 1st and 2nd floors contain the **Museum of National History**, a chronologically-

arranged portrait gallery of kings, noblemen and olden-day celebrities, interspersed with unusual pieces of furniture. It's a lot to take in in one go – you might be better off concentrating on the time periods that interest you.

On the 3rd floor is the **Moderne Samling** (Modern Collection), a large collection of 20th-century paintings and photography.

SLOTSHAVEN

The castle gardens lie to the north. The formal **Baroque garden** (☎ 10am-sunset), visible from the castle windows and made up of perfect terraces and immaculately manicured yew and box, demonstrates that even nature must bend to a king's will. There's also a Romantic garden, **Indelukket**, where 18th-century rigidity melts into a wilder 19th-century notion of gardening. North again is the oak wood of **Lille Dyrehave**, planted to provide material for boat-building after the Danish fleet was confiscated by England in 1807. You could easily spend a pleasant hour's outing strolling through the three sections.

THE SLOTSØ FERRY

From mid-May to mid-September, the little ferry **Frederiksborg** (☎ 48 24 26 26) makes a 30-minute round trip of the castle lake between 11am and 5pm Monday to Saturday, and between 1pm and 5pm on Sunday. It stops at three small piers: one on the edge of Torvet, one near the castle entrance, and one by the Baroque gardens. The fare is 25/5kr for adult/child.

Sleeping

Accommodation is scarce in Hillerød. The tourist office keeps a short list of B&Bs, but

DENMARK'S MOST HAUNTED...

Esrum Kloster (☎ 48 36 04 00; www.esrum.dk; Klostergade, Esrum; adult/5-15 yr 40/20kr; ☎ 11am-4pm daily May-mid-Oct, 11am-4pm Thu-Sun mid-Oct-Apr), a monastery 15km north of Hillerød, has a juicy ghost story attached, about the demonic Brother Rus, employed as the monastery's cook in the 16th century. Wicked old Rus served up decadent dishes and lashings of sinful wine to his fellow monks, in between chasing the serving wenches round the kitchen and having late-night chats with Satan.

Word of this evil-doing got back to the abbot, who had Brother Rus tortured to death on his own cooking grill (on view in the monastery today). A splatter of his blood has defied all attempts to wash it off, and the damned monk has been spotted wandering the monastery in the dead of night.

Bus 305 and 306 from Hillerød run past the monastery.

they fill up quickly even out of high season – book ahead.

our pick Hillerød Camping (☎ 48 26 48 54; www.hillerodcamping.dk; Blytækkervej 18; camp site per person 65kr; ☎ Apr-mid-Sep) This wonderful two-star camping ground is about a 20-minute walk directly south of the castle along Slangerrupgade. You can really feel the love – free bike rental, bags of toys for children, a spotless kitchen, a cosy lounge with books and magazines, and even fresh flowers in the toilets.

Danhostel Hillerød (☎ 48 26 19 86; www.hillerodhostel.dk; Lejrskolevej 4; dm/s/d 150/300/325kr; ☎) Although it's not very central – this lakeside hostel is 2.5km east of town – you can't complain about its facilities. The hostel is geared towards school groups: you'll find ping-pong, air hockey, a pool table, badminton and pétanque, as well as bicycle (per hour/day 25/75kr) and canoe (per day 150kr) hire. Buses 701, 702 and 705 run from near the hostel to town.

Hotel Hillerød (☎ 48 24 08 00; www.hotelhillerod.dk; Milnersvej 41; s/d incl breakfast 995/1130kr; ☎) Each bathroom at this strangely-designed modern bungalow hotel juts out into a kind of covered atrium – odd. Rooms are pleasant and entirely unmemorable in that Ikea-type way. Sixty-two have superior facilities – flat-screen TVs and handy little kitchenettes. Hotel Hillerød is about 2km south of the castle. Bikes can be borrowed.

Eating

Café Encore (☎ 48 22 14 88; Torvet 11; light meals 70-120kr; ☎ 10am-5pm) Right in the centre of the sloping town square, this is the place to head on a sunny afternoon for coffee, brunch, lunch and/or people-watching. There's a good choice of light meals – nachos, wraps, salads and burgers.

Ristorante La Perla (☎ 48 24 35 33; www.laperla.dk; Torvet 1; pasta 90-120kr, pizzas 80kr, fish & meat mains 190-220kr; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) La Perla's Sicilian chef serves up genuine Italian food, and very tasty stuff it is. Navy curtains and blue-and-white checked tablecloths add smartness: it's definitely more upmarket than your average pizzeria, yet the atmosphere's relaxed. In summer, you can dine in the cobblestone courtyard.

El Castillo's Cantina (☎ 48 26 19 11; Slotsgade 61; mains 90-120kr; ☎ 5-10pm) The design scheme at this cheerful family-friendly Mexican restaurant is certainly vivid (striped tablecloths, sequined sombreros and cacti), service is smiley and portions are huge, if sugary. Several tables on the upper balcony have ringside castle views.

Thai 4 You (☎ 48 24 85 30; www.thai4you.dk; Østergade 22; mains 90kr; ☎ 4-10pm) East of Torvet, this authentic Thai restaurant has a long menu of favourites, including a 'luxury seafood' section. If you want to test beers from local microbrewery Brøckshouse, there's a good selection here.

Getting There & Away

The S-train (A & E lines) runs every 10 minutes between Copenhagen and Hillerød (66.50kr), a 40-minute ride.

Trains from Hillerød run eastward to Fredensborg (19kr, 12 minutes) and Helsingør (57kr, 30 minutes), north to Gilleleje (47.50kr, 31 minutes) and west to Tisvildeleje (47.50kr, 31 minutes); all services operate at least hourly.

Buses also link Hillerød with North Zealand towns but they are much slower than the train and cost just as much.

Getting Around

Buses 701 and 702 depart frequently from the train station and can drop you near the castle gate (19kr).

Hired (adult) bikes at **Skansen Cykler** (☎ 48 26 17 27; Skansevej 31; per day/week 50/250kr). The three sleeping options listed above also loan bicycles.

FREDENSBORG

pop 8291

Small, quiet Fredensborg IS its royal palace, plus the wonderful palace gardens that stretch alongside Denmark's second-largest lake, Esrum Sø. The palace is only open to the public in July, but it's worth a day out here anyway for peaceful greenery, swimming, boating and fishing opportunities.

The seasonal **Fredensborg Turistbureau** (☎ 48 48 32 80; www.visitfredensborg.dk; Slotsgade 2; ☎ noon-4pm Mon-Fri Apr, 11am-4.30pm daily Jun-Aug, noon-4pm Sun-Fri May & Sep) is just outside the palace.

Sights**FREDENSBORG SLOT**

The royal family's summer residence, **Fredensborg Palace** (☎ 33 40 31 87; Slotsgade 1; ☎ Jul by guided tour only), was built in 1720 by Frederik IV. Its name – 'Peace Palace' – commemorates the truce that Denmark had just achieved with its Scandinavian neighbours. The countrymanor appearance reflects the more tranquil mood of that era, an abrupt contrast with the moat-encircled fortresses of Kronborg and Frederiksborg that preceded it.

The main Italian Baroque mansion, with marble floors and a large central cupola, is not as impressive as some other Danish royal palaces, partly because of its spread-out design. The building's very...neat, but the palace is really made by its gardens, a blending of Baroque formality and a more luxuriant Romantic vision.

Fredensborg's interior can only be visited during July, when the royal family holidays elsewhere. Guided palace tours (adult/child 50/20kr) run every 15 minutes between 1pm and 4.20pm daily. Whenever the royal family is in residence, the building is flanked by smart Little-Tin-Soldier guards, with white-striped uniforms and bearskin hats. The **changing of the guard** is at noon daily.

The palace is about 1km from the train station, and well signposted.

FREDENSBORG SLOTSHAVE

The palace is surrounded by a huge area of garden and parkland (some parts with limited access). The **Palace Park**, open free to the

public year-round, is a 120-hectare expanse of woodland, crossed by long riding avenues that radiate outwards from the palace. Wandering through tunnels of cool green leaves is particularly delightful on a hot summer's day. Its most unusual feature is **Normandsdalen**, west of the palace, a circular amphitheatre containing 70 life-sized statues of Norwegian and Faroese folk characters. The original small wooden dolls of these fishermen, farmers, soldiers and servants were carved by an 18th-century Norwegian postman, Jørgen Christensen Garnaa, who sent them to King Frederik V. Frederik liked them so much he had them made from sandstone.

The royal family jealously shield the Reserved Gardens from public eyes, except in July when you can visit the **Orangery and Herb Garden** (adult/child 50/20kr, joint ticket to palace & orangery 75/30kr) by guided tour between 1pm and 4.20pm.

ESRUM SØ

About 1km west of the palace gate along Skipperallé, you'll come to the lovely Esrum Sø, Denmark's second largest lake at 17km². A trail skirts around its shores, or you can explore the water by boat. The lakeside restaurant Skipperhuset (p126) has rowing boats for hire, and there's a summer ferry service to Gribskov, a forested area with trails and picnic grounds on the western side of the lake.

Sleeping

Tourist office staff can book rooms in private homes, with doubles costing around 600kr including breakfast, plus a 25kr booking fee.

Danhostel Fredensborg (☎ 48 48 03 15; www.fredensborghostel.dk; Østrupvej 3; s/d from 195/295kr; ☎ Jan-mid-Dec; ☎) The hostel occupies a prime location just 300m south of Fredensborg Slot. There are no dorms here – most of its 88 beds are in double rooms (all with washbasin or bathroom). There's a large secluded garden, and a bread-baking service.

Pension Bondehuset (☎ 48 48 01 12; www.bondehuset.dk in Danish; Sorupvej 14; s/d incl breakfast 585/775kr; ☎) An upmarket rural getaway, this 18th-century manor house offers comfortable rooms and free rowing boats for guests' use. It's right on the lake on the western side of town.

Hotel Store Kro (☎ 48 40 01 11; www.storekro.dk; Slotsgade 6; s/d with breakfast from 1100/1500kr; ☎ ☎) This classic inn is practically part of the palace – Frederik IV built it in 1723 as an extra

accommodation wing. Not surprisingly, no two bedrooms are alike, but all have pieces of period furniture, old-fashioned décor and full amenities, and a couple have castle views. Wireless internet access throughout.

Eating

Café Under Kronen (Jernbanegade 1) For quickie lunch snacks, this round glass café is right outside the palace gates.

Skipperhuset (☎ 48 48 17 17; www.skipperhuset.dk; Skipperallé 6; mains 90-130kr; ☎ noon-5.30pm May-Oct) It's hard to imagine a more idyllic setting for alfresco dining than this restaurant on Esrum Sø. Fish is delicately prepared and topped with fresh seasonal vegetables, and there's usually a veggie option such as feta and spinach pancakes.

Restaurant Anna Sophia (☎ 48 40 01 11; Slotsgade 6; mains 230kr; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) As you'd expect, Hotel Store Kro's restaurant offers top-end food in a chandelied dining room. The lunch menu consists of salads and Danish open sandwiches, while at dinnertime there's a traditional French influence with dishes of foie gras, lobster and duck à l'orange.

Getting There & Away

Fredensborg is midway between Hillerød (19kr, 12 minutes) and Helsingør (47.50kr, 20 minutes). Trains run about twice hourly from early morning.

NORTH COAST

Gorgeous white-sand beaches with shallow water and gentle waves line the northern Kattegat coast. Although the scattered small towns and villages only have a few thousand residents in winter, in summer the holiday homes fill and throngs of beach-goers create a jolly sunshine-and-ice-cream atmosphere.

HORNBAEK

pop 3642

'Denmark's St Tropez!', shout the tourist brochures. There are two similarities: Hornbæk's Blue-Flag beach, a vast expanse of soft white sand, is just as beautiful as any you'll find in southern France; and it certainly attracts more than its fair share of foxy young socialites.

Danish artists first discovered the attractions of this little-known fishing village in the 19th century, with early tourists following

hot on their heels. Thanks to geographical peculiarities, Hornbæk enjoys more sunshine than anywhere else in Denmark.

Orientation

From the train station it's a five-minute walk – about 200m – directly north along Havnevej to the harbour. Climb the dunes to the left and you're on the beach.

Information

Danske Bank (☎ 49 76 01 20; Nordre Strandvej 350) In the town centre.

Hornbæk Turistbureau (☎ 49 70 47 47; www.hornbaek.dk; Vestre Stejlebakke 2A; ☎ 1-7pm Mon, 1-5pm Thu, 10am-5pm Wed & Fri, 10am-2pm Sat year-round, plus 1-5pm Tue mid-Jun–Aug) Inside the library. To reach it take the walkway at the side of Danske Bank. Three computers provide free internet access.

Post office (☎ 70 00 12 25) Opposite the train station.

Sights & Activities

HORNBAEK BEACH

Hornbæk's gorgeous Blue-Flag beach is the best on the north coast and the town's main attraction. The sand is white, the air is scented with salt and wild roses, there's plenty of space for sunbathing, and in high summer lifeguards keep an eye on the water. The beach stretches out to either side of the harbour – even though it borders the town, it's pleasantly undeveloped, with all the commercial facilities on the other side of the dunes. The eastern side is where the kitesurfers and windsurfers hang out: you'll need your own gear to join them.

To charter a boat to go **fishing**, contact the tourist office or the harbourmaster's office on the southern side of the harbour; prices average 600kr (per boat per day) for up to three passengers.

HORNBAEK PLANTAGE

For an enjoyable nature stroll, **Hornbæk Plantage**, a public woodland that extends 3.5km along the coast east from Hornbæk, has numerous interconnecting trails branching out either side of Rte 237. One trail hugs the coast from Lochersvej in Hornbæk to the eastern end of the plantage. There are several areas along Nordre Strandvej (Rte 237) where you can park a car and start your wanderings. A free forestry map *Vandreture i Statsskovene, Hornbæk Plantage* shows all the trails and is available from the tourist office.

Sleeping

The tourist office can book private single/double rooms from 300/500kr.

Hornbæk Camping DCU (☎ 49 70 02 23; www.camping-hornbaek.dk; Planetvej 4; camp site per person 66kr; ☎ year-round) Nestling up to the woods of Hornbæk Plantage, this three-star camping ground is about 1.5km southeast of the centre, off Sauntevej. It has good facilities – smart bathrooms, huts for hire, and a playground and 'bouncy pillow' for kids.

Ewaldsgården Pension (☎ 49 70 00 82; www.ewaldsgaarden.dk in Danish; Johannes Ewaldsvej 5; s/d/fam incl breakfast 485/735/1020kr; ☎ late Jun–mid-Aug) This 17th-century farmhouse pension is a delight, with fresh white paintwork, trailing plants, and a cosy mix of antiques and cottage-style furnishings. All 12 rooms have a washbasin; showers and toilets are off the hall. There's also a simple guest kitchen. Ewaldsgården is a five-minute walk southeast of the train station.

Hotel Villa Strand (☎ 49 70 00 88; www.villastrand.dk; Kystvej 12; s/d incl breakfast 850/950kr; ☎ P) If this hotel was any closer to the sea, it would be floating towards Sweden. Rooms in the main building

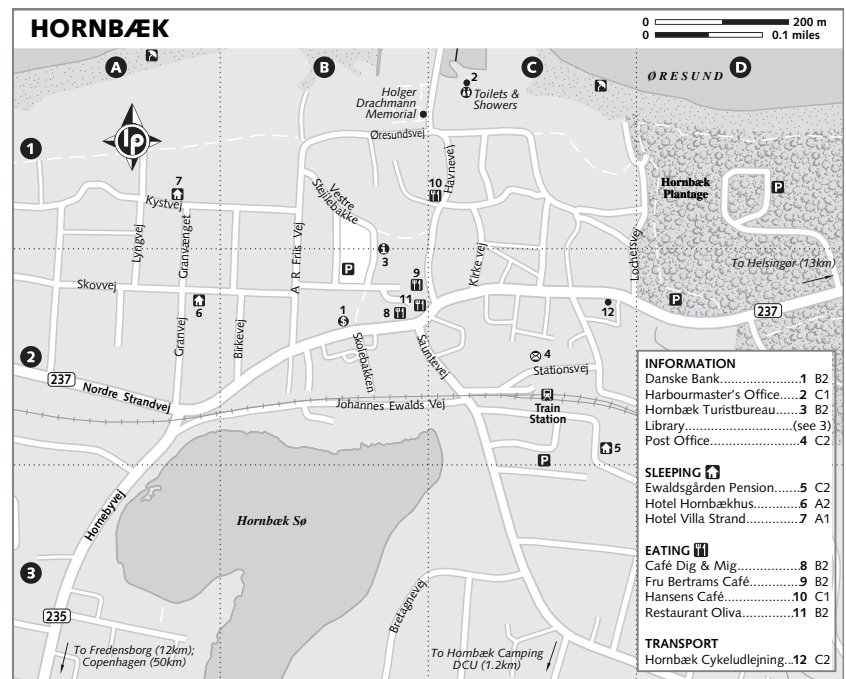
are large, with cool pastel décor and a lofty air. There are smaller, cheaper, but still tasteful rooms (single/double 600/850kr) in the garden annexe. All have private bathrooms.

Hotel Hornbækhus (☎ 49 70 01 69; www.hornbaekhus.com; Skovvej 7; s/d incl breakfast 1195/1395kr; ☎ P) Down another green lane full of flowers and birds, this is the grandest hotel in Hornbæk, with the feel of a stately home. Rooms are fresh and bright, and some have their own balconies. Cheaper rooms with shared bathrooms cost 725/825kr per single/double.

Eating

Café Dig & Mig (☎ 49 71 79 42; Nordre Strandvej 340; ☎ noon-10pm) This café-bar is a pretty little place, with tiled tables, local artwork around the walls and a patio garden for sunny days, although cups of coffee are on the teeny side of small.

Fru Bertrams Café (☎ 49 70 09 66; Havnevej 3; burgers 45kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) Bertrams has a split personality: a dark, smoky bar lurks behind the sunny conservatory. Lunchtime food is of the simple café variety (wraps, bagels and sandwiches); while in the evening things



become more meaty with burgers and steaks. There's live music and stand-up comedy at weekends.

Restaurant Oliva (☎ 49 76 11 77; www.oliva.dk in Danish; Havnevej 1; sandwiches 60-90kr, mains 200kr; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) This upmarket restaurant serves meticulously prepared, mainly Danish, dishes. You can nibble on an open sandwich in the leafy patio garden at lunchtime, or dine on substantial mains such as Jersey steak or duck with rhubarb in the evening.

Hansens Café (☎ 49 70 04 79; Havnevej 19; mains 80-160kr; ☺ from 6pm Mon-Sat, from noon Sun) Hansens is in the town's oldest house, an earthen-roofed half-timbered building with a pleasant public atmosphere. The menu changes daily but you can expect to find good Danish food at moderate prices.

Eating opportunities at the harbour include a fish market and **Havnegrillen**, a fast-food stand selling hot dogs and ice cream.

Getting There & Around

Trains connect Hornbæk with Helsingør (38kr, 25 minutes) and Gilleleje (38kr, 15 minutes) about twice hourly.

You can rent **bicycles** for 50kr per day at **Hornbæk Cykeludlejning** (☎ 49 21 03 43; Nordre Strandvej 315D; ☺ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat & Sun).

GILLELEJE

pop 6301

Gilleleje, Zealand's northernmost town, has been a fishing village since the 14th century and retains a certain timeless character. During WWII, its fishing boats were used to smuggle thousands of Jews over the water to neutral Sweden, but don't expect any such excitement today. Low-key charms include several beaches, an early-morning harbour-side auction, bustling fish restaurants, and a coastal walk to a small monument dedicated to Kierkegaard. Between Hornbæk and Gilleleje is Tegners Museum and Statuepark, devoted to one of Denmark's leading sculptors.

The Gilleleje **tourist office** (☎ 48 30 01 74; www.gilleleje-turistbureau.dk; Hovedgade 6F; ☺ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat mid-Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri & 10am-noon Sat Sep-mid-Jun) is in the town centre, 200m east of the train station.

Sights & Activities

Gilleleje Museum (☎ 48 30 16 31; www.holbo.dk in Danish; Vesterbrogade 56; adult/under 18 incl entry to Lighthouse Museum 30kr/free; ☺ 1-4pm Wed-Mon Jun-Aug, 1-4pm

Wed-Sat Sep-May) is on the western side of town. The museum runs through Gilleleje's history from the Middle Ages to the advent of summer tourism. It includes a 19th-century fisherman's house.

Although they aren't as long and golden as those at Hornbæk or Tisvildeleje, **beaches** surround the town. The one on the western side, a stretch of sand and stone, meets Blue Flag standards and has lifeguards in summer. If you're happier on top of the waves, you can hire little motor boats from **Gilleleje Bådudlejning** (☎ 29 60 00 37; www.boatrental.dk; Fiskerlodden 1) for 650kr per day plus deposit.

Of the two **coastal trails**, the one to the west, which starts near the intersection of Nordre Strandvej and Vesterbrogade, leads 1.75km to a stone **memorial** dedicated to the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who used to make visits to this coast.

The trail to the east begins just off Hovedgade and leads 2.5km to the site where two lighthouses with coal-burning beacons were erected in 1772. The eastern one is now the **Fyrhistorik Museum på Nakkehoved** (☎ 48 30 16 31; Fryvejen 20; adult/child incl entry to the Gilleleje Museum 30kr/free; ☺ noon-4pm Tue-Sun mid-Jun-Aug, 1-4pm Thu-Sun Apr-mid-Jun, Sep & Oct), which traces the history of Danish lighthouses from the 16th century. You can get to the lighthouse on the coastal footpath or by turning north off Rte 237 onto Fryvejen.

A larger attraction on this quiet northern coast is (☎ 49 71 91 77; www.rudolphtegner.dk in Danish; Museumsvej 19, Villingørød; adult/under 12 40kr/free; ☺ 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, noon-5pm Tue-Sun mid-Apr-May & Sep-mid-Oct). One of the first Danish sculptors to discover concrete, Rudolph Tegner (1873-1950) used the wild heathland midway between Gilleleje and Hornbæk as a backdrop for his monumental sculptures. The museum was built later, and now displays more than 250 of Tegner's pieces. The museum also functions as a mausoleum - Tegner is buried in a chamber in the heart of the building. Bus 340 between Helsingør and Gilleleje runs past the museum.

Sleeping

There are no hostels or camping grounds in Gilleleje, but tourist office staff can book rooms in private homes for around 450/800kr for singles/doubles, plus a 35kr booking fee.

Hotel Strand (☎ 48 30 05 12; fax 48 30 18 59; Vesterbrogade 4; s/d incl breakfast without bathroom 560/820kr, with

bathroom 710/990kr) This central 25-room hotel is a short walk west from the harbour. Staff are friendly, but prices are high for rooms that desperately need renovating. Best are the five doubles with private balconies facing the sea.

Gilleleje Badehotel (☎ 48 30 13 47; www.gillelejebadehotel.dk; Hulsøvej 15; r incl breakfast 890-1390kr) Kirkegaard was a frequent guest at this luxurious beach hotel. The atmosphere is so richly nostalgic you half expect the hotel to be sepia-tinted, but instead a homely blue-and-white colour scheme prevails. All the rooms are bright and sunlit and most have balconies with views of Sweden. A sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi are available. The hotel is 1km west of town.

Eating

Rogeriet Bornholm (☎ 48 30 01 10; Gilleleje Havn; fish 40kr; ☺ 8am-6pm Fri, 8am-4pm Sat-Mon) Close to Adamsen's, this simple smokehouse sells inexpensive smoked fish by the piece.

Adamsen's Fisk (☎ 48 30 09 27; Gilleleje Havn; sandwiches 45kr, plaice & chips 65kr; ☺ 11am-10pm summer, shorter hr rest of yr) On a sunny afternoon, head for this popular harbourside takeaway. After selecting your tasty fish-based snack, you're given a token which flashes when your order is ready. For those who prefer raw fish, Adamsen have a sushi bar next door.

Restaurant Brasserie (☎ 48 30 21 30; www.brasseriet-gilleleje.dk; Nordre Havnevej 3; lunch mains 85kr, dinner mains 170-200kr; ☺ lunch & dinner) By the harbour, Brasserie offers open sandwiches of whitebait, herring, plaice, eel, salmon, shrimps and meatballs at lunchtime. The evening menu also has a good choice of fish dishes, including seafood kebab and sauteed plaice, plus meaty mains such as Wiener schnitzel and veal. Vegetarians may struggle.

Gilleleje Havn (☎ 48 30 30 39; Havnevej 14; lunch mains 55-100kr, dinner mains 200kr; ☺ lunch & dinner) Gilleleje Havn is an excellent modern option, with an open kitchen and innovative menu of French/Danish seafood, with the odd piece of chicken/steak among the fish dishes. There are good views over the harbour.

Getting There & Around

Trains run between Hillerød and Gilleleje (47.50kr, 30 minutes) about twice hourly on weekdays, hourly at weekends, and between Helsingør and Gilleleje (57kr, 40 minutes) about twice hourly every day.

TISVILDELEJE

Tisvildeleje is essentially a glorious sweep of golden-sand beach with a small seaside village attached. The beach is backed by hills and forests, threaded through with nature trails. You could easily spend several relaxing days here, sunbathing, swimming, strolling through the woods, and generally taking things very, very easy.

The seasonal **tourist office** (☎ 48 70 74 51; www.helsingor.com; Banevej 8; ☺ noon-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-3pm Sat mid-Jun-Aug) is based in Tisvildeleje train station.

Sights & Activities

The Blue-Flag **beach**, a kilometre-long stretch of pure white sand at the foot of the village, is why people come to Tisvildeleje. A shallow-sloping shore and lifeguards at the height of summer make it a favourite with families. There are changing rooms, toilets and an ice-cream kiosk at the edge of the large parking area. Other beaches are accessible a short walk away from town.

From the car park, you can walk along the beach or on a dirt path through the woods, about 3km south to **Troldeskoven** (Witch Wood), an area of ancient trees that have been sculpted into haunting shapes by the wind.

Inland from the beach is **Tisvilde Hegn**, a windswept forest of twisted trees and heather-covered hills that extends southwest for more than 8km. Much of this enchanting forest was planted in the 18th century to stabilise sand drifts that were engulfing the area. Tisvilde Hegn has numerous trails, including one to **Asserbo Slotsruin**, the moat-encircled ruins of a 12th-century manor house and monastery, near the southern boundary of the forest. Trail maps are available free from the tourist office.

Sleeping

Danhostel Tisvildeleje (☎ 48 70 98 50; www.helene.dk; Bygmarken 30; camping per person 40kr, dm/s/d 150/470/490kr; ☺ year-round; P ♿) One kilometre east of town, this modern hostel and camping ground shares the excellent facilities of the Sankt Helene holiday complex. The grounds cover 12-hectare and have walking trails, sports fields, playgrounds, farm animals, kids' activities and a nice restaurant, and are within walking distance of a sandy beach. The complex is accessible to people in wheelchairs. By train, get off at Godhavns station, one stop before Tisvildeleje: the hostel is a short walk north.

Bed & Breakfast Hårlandsgård (☎ 48 70 83 96; www.haarlandsgaard.dk; Hårlands Allé 12; r 450kr; (P)) This 18th-century farmhouse, about a kilometre from town near Godhavns station, has a sunny garden and comfy rooms, and the former stables house an art gallery. It had no signpost when we visited – it's the house on the right-hand side of the first sharp turn of Hårlands Allé.

Tisvildeleje Strand Hotel (☎ 48 70 71 19; www.strand-hotel.dk in Danish; Hovedgaden 75; d incl breakfast without/with bathroom 695/895kr; (P)) This young-spirited hotel is a cheerful spot. Each room has been decorated by a local artist and no two are alike – they're a whirl of glittering mobiles, seaworn pebbles, neon butterflies and surreal murals. A Jacuzzi was being installed at the time of writing; there's a good restaurant (see Eating); and the beach is within easy walking distance.

Helenekilde Badehotel (☎ 48 70 70 01; www.helenekilde.com; Strandvej 25; d facing inland 895-1395kr, d with sea view 1195-1595kr) This beachfront hotel has the same owners as the Tisvildeleje Strand, but you'd never guess from the décor. Here, super-plain rooms glow white with northern seaside light. Rooms 11, 12 and 13 are perhaps the best, sharing a large balcony with wide ocean views. Almost half the other rooms look out over the waves. The hotel is a five-minute walk along a leafy lane (signposted from the station).

Eating

Café Tillevilde (☎ 21 91 28 98; Hovedgaden 66; mains 120kr; ☎ 11am-10pm Apr-Sep) This pleasant summer café on the main street has a cool white-tiled interior with azure accents, and a sunny blue yard where you can watch the world go by. A short menu of salads and snacks is chalked up daily on the blackboard. Don't be fooled into thinking these 'light meals' are insubstantial offerings – portions are big.

Tisvildeleje Cafeen (☎ 48 70 88 86; Hovedgaden 55; mains 140kr; ☎ lunch & dinner daily summer, Fri-Sun only rest of yr) Gorge yourself on the dinner buffet, a real treat of fresh fish, steaks, vegetables and piping hot bread. It's also one of the main venues for the annual Tisvildeleje folk festival, so you might catch blasts of music if you're here during the first weekend of September.

Restaurant Højbohus (☎ 48 70 71 19; Hovedgaden 75; 3/6 tapas choices 155/195kr, dinner mains 150kr; ☎ lunch & dinner summer, Fri-Sun only rest of yr) The Strand Hotel's cool white bare-boards restaurant has a

casual summery vibe, and there's a pleasant terrace where you can raise a glass of wine as the sun sets. Light tapas lunches give way to an Italian menu in the evening. There's usually one veggie option (risotto with summer veg when we visited).

Tisvildeleje has a good **bakery** (☎ 48 70 71 22; Hovedgaden 60; ☎ 6.30am-4pm Tue-Sun), and there's a grocery shop opposite. A couple of kiosks sell burgers, hot dogs, pizzas and ice cream, in town and at the beach car park.

Getting There & Around

Getting round the coast from Gilleleje to Tisvildeleje by public transport isn't as simple as it might be. Generally, bus 342 operates every two hours from Gilleleje; you then have to change to bus 362 in Helsingør (28.50kr, 1½ hours).

Trains run between Tisvildeleje and Hillerød (47.50kr, 30 minutes) once an hour; there are a few extra trains in the early morning and the late afternoon.

Bicycles can be hired at the **Hydro Texaco petrol station** (☎ 48 70 80 13; Hovedgaden 54), 200m west of the train station, for 75kr per day.

FJORD TOWNS

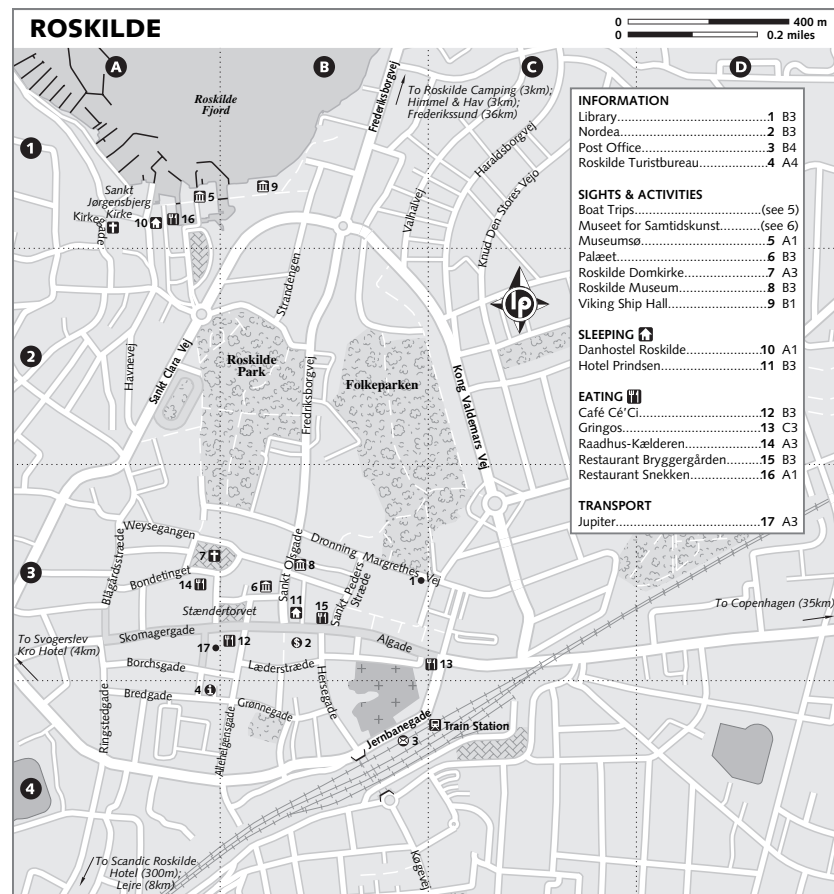
Roskilde Fjord slices its way over 30km inland. Several towns lie scattered around its shores, the best of which is undoubtedly Roskilde itself, an unmissable tourist spot with its fascinating Unesco-blessed cathedral, Viking artefacts and huge rock festival.

ROSKILDE

pop 45,807

In July, fans pour into town for the four-day-long Roskilde Festival, which vies with Glastonbury for the title of Europe's biggest rock festival. Anyone who's anyone on the international scene has played here – past crowds have grunged out to Nirvana, headbanged before Metallica and danced like idiots to Arctic Monkeys.

If you aren't a festival fan, pity the poor fools for their warm beer and toilet queues, and relish the town instead. Roskilde is justly famous for its superb Viking Ship Museum and striking cathedral, the burial site of Danish royalty. It's also hilly for Denmark – there's a fascinating novelty in walking *down* to the harbour, then back *up* to the centre again.



Roskilde is a popular day trip from Copenhagen, only 30km away.

History

The city came to prominence in the Viking age, when it was the capital of Denmark. Harald Bluetooth built Zealand's first wooden-stave Christian church here in 980. It was replaced by a stone building in 1026 on the instructions of a woman named Estrid, whose husband was assassinated in the stave church after a heated chess match (only in Scandinavia!). The foundations of the 11th-century stone church are beneath the floor of the present-day cathedral.

Medieval Roskilde was a thriving trade centre and the powerhouse of Danish Cath-

olicism, big enough to support the country's grandest cathedral. The town began its decline when the capital moved to Copenhagen in the early 15th century, and its population shrank radically after the Reformation in 1536.

Information

Library (☎ 46 31 50 00; www.roskildebib.dk; Dronning Margrethes Vej 14; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat year-round, plus noon-4pm Sun mid-Sep-Mar) Free internet access.

Nordea (☎ 46 32 32 33; Algade 4) One of several banks in the centre.

Post office (☎ 70 12 40 00; Jernbanegade 3; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Next door to the train station.

Roskilde Turistbureau (☎ 46 31 65 65; www.visitroskilde.com; Gullandsstræde 15; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-2pm Sat Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Sep-Jun)

Sights

VIKING SHIP MUSEUM

Viking fans will be wowed by the superb **Viking Ship Museum** (☎ 46 30 02 00; www.vikingshipmuseum.com; Vindeboder 12; adult/student/under 17 May-Sep 80/70kr/free, Oct-Apr 50/40kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm), which displays five Viking ships discovered at the bottom of Roskilde Fjord. The museum is made up of two main sections – the Viking Ship Hall, where the boats themselves are kept; and Museumsø, where archaeological work takes place. There are free guided tours in English daily at noon and 3pm in July and August; and at noon on weekends in May, June and September.

Viking Ship Hall

Roskilde's Viking-era inhabitants were expecting trouble in the mid-11th century. The five clinker-built ships, all made between 1030 and 1042, were deliberately scuttled in a narrow channel 20km north of Roskilde, presumably to prevent an attacking army. Once they had been holed and sunk, a mass of stones was piled on top to create an underwater barrier.

In 1962, a cofferdam was built around the barrier and sea water was pumped out. Within four months, archaeologists were able to remove the mound of stones and excavate the ships, whose wooden hulks were in thousands of pieces. These ship fragments were painstakingly reassembled onto skeleton frames in the purpose-built Viking Ship Hall. This brutal-looking minimalist construction becomes something magical inside, where the ghostly boats seem to float once more on the waters of the fjord.

The ships, known as Skuldelev 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, show off the range of the Viking shipwrights: there's an ocean-going trading vessel, a 30m warship for international raiding, a coastal trader, a 17m warship probably used around the Baltic, and a fishing boat. Carbon dating and dendrochronology have discovered further secrets, including their builders' geographical scope – Skuldelev 1, for example, was made in Norway, whereas Skuldelev 2 came from Dublin.

Interesting displays about the Viking Age put the boats into a historical context, and the basement cinema runs a 14-minute film (in Danish, English, French, German, Ital-

ian and Spanish) about the 1962 excavation. There's also a room where kids can dress up as Vikings, jump aboard a model ship, and write their names in runes.

Museumsø

On Museum Island, adjacent to the Viking Ship Hall, craftspeople use Viking-era techniques and tools to build replicas of Viking ships. *Ottar*, *Roar Ege*, *Helge Ask* and *Kraka Fyr* (reconstructions of Skuldelev 1, 3, 5 and 6 respectively) are moored in the **harbour**, where you can really appreciate their light, flexible designs.

At the time of writing, the largest Viking ship reconstruction ever was sailing from Roskilde to Dublin. An incredible 340 trees went into the creation of *Havhingsten fra Glendalough* (based on the 60-oared warship Skuldelev 2), and the total labour totted up to 44,000 man hours. Assuming that the Irish voyage is a success, the ship should be back in Roskilde in mid-2008: follow its progress at www.havhingsten.dk.

In summer, a shipwright, blacksmith, tar-burner, weaver, rope-maker and fletcher demonstrate their crafts. Children can join in the fun by striking coins and painting their own shields.

Museumsø also has an **archaeological workshop** (☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri), where you can watch researchers from the National Museum analysing recent excavations.

Boat Trips

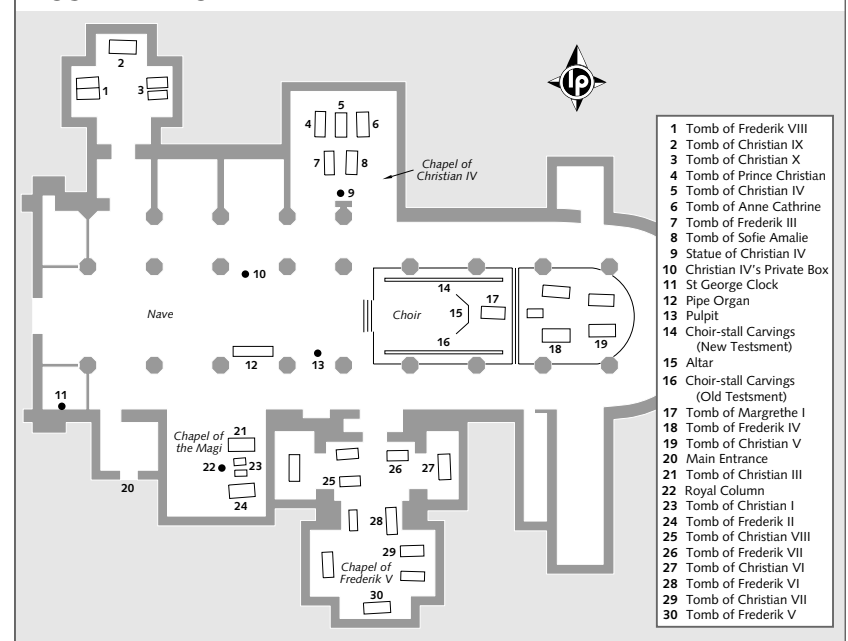
If you've always had an urge to leap aboard a longboat for a spot of light pillaging, join one of the museum's hour-long boat trips. **Traditional Nordic boats** are propelled across the water by *you* and the rest of your shipmates.

In July and August, trips run up to five times daily (definitely at 2pm, usually at noon, 11am, 3pm and 4pm); in May, June and September, there are up to four sailings (definitely at noon and 1pm, usually at 3pm and 4pm) at weekends only. Sailing tickets (adult/child 55/45kr) are additional to the main museum entry ticket.

ROSKILDE DOMKIRKE

Denmark's most amazing cathedral is **Roskilde Domkirke** (☎ 46 31 65 65; www.roskildedomkirke.dk; Domkirkepladsen; adult/child 25/15kr; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat & 12.30-5pm Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sat & 12.30am-4pm Sun Oct-Mar), a designated Unesco World Herit-

ROSKILDE DOMKIRKE



- 1 Tomb of Frederik VIII
- 2 Tomb of Christian IX
- 3 Tomb of Christian X
- 4 Tomb of Prince Christian
- 5 Tomb of Christian IV
- 6 Tomb of Anne Cathrine
- 7 Tomb of Frederik III
- 8 Tomb of Sofie Amalie
- 9 Statue of Christian IV
- 10 Christian IV's Private Box
- 11 St George Clock
- 12 Pipe Organ
- 13 Pulpit
- 14 Choir-stall Carvings (New Testament)
- 15 Altar
- 16 Choir-stall Carvings (Old Testament)
- 17 Tomb of Margrethe I
- 18 Tomb of Frederik IV
- 19 Tomb of Christian V
- 20 Main Entrance
- 21 Tomb of Christian III
- 22 Royal Column
- 23 Tomb of Christian I
- 24 Tomb of Frederik II
- 25 Tomb of Christian VII
- 26 Tomb of Frederik VI
- 27 Tomb of Christian VI
- 28 Tomb of Frederik VI
- 29 Tomb of Christian VII
- 30 Tomb of Frederik V

age Site. It dates back to the 12th century, but has been added to so many times that it's now a superb showcase of 800 years' worth of Danish architecture. As the royal mausoleum, it contains the crypts of 37 Danish kings and queens – contemplating the bones of so many powerful historical figures is a moving memento mori. No fewer than 11 spectacular chapels and crypts sprout from the main body of the cathedral. No doubt every visitor will have their favourite: here are ours.

The **chapel of King Christian IV**, off the northern side of the cathedral, contains the builder king himself. His ocean-green coffin, surrounded by processing angels, is quite low-key for such an extravagant monarch. Most of the decoration in the chapel – vast, overly dramatic paintings of Christian's life surrounded by trompe l'oeil details – is actually from the 19th century, as the original sepulchre burned down a year before Christian's death. The only contemporary features are the chapel gates, so ornate they were said to have been created by the devil himself (although really the work of Christian's favourite metalsmith Caspar Fincke).

There are some fantastic 15th-century frescoes (the largest in Denmark) in the **chapel of the Magi**. It also contains the Renaissance sepulchres of Christian III and Frederik II, the most ornate in the cathedral. They look like antique temples, guarded by halberd-bearing soldiers. Another interesting feature of the chapel is the Royal Column, which shows the heights of visiting princes – from Christian I at a lofty 219.5cm down to titchy Christian VII at 164.1cm.

The neoclassical **chapel of Frederik V** whippers 'death' like no other part of the cathedral. You'll find twelve members of the royal family here, all interred in white alabaster sepulchres, surrounded by skulls, angels and weeping women.

The **nave** contains Christian IV's private box, and an intricate 17th-century pulpit (1610) made of marble, alabaster and sandstone by Copenhagen sculptor Hans Brokman. A kill-joy dean disconnected the mechanism of the wonderful **clock** in the 18th century, annoyed that his parishioners paid more attention to it than to him, but today's church-people have relented. St George slays the dragon on the

hour; the poor beast lets out a pitiful wheeze; and two ballad characters ting the bells.

Margrethe P's elegant sarcophagus and the shining golden altarpiece in the **choir** usually attract crowds of admirers. We prefer the wonderfully lively 15th-century choir-stall carvings; highlights from the New Testament line the northern side, and fearsome Old Testament tales the south – Joseph being stuffed down a hole, Judith chopping off Holofernes' head, and Noah's family crammed into the ark...

From late June to early August, tours (adult/child 20/10kr) are conducted by multilingual guides at 11am and 2pm Monday to Friday, 11am Saturday and 2pm Sunday. Free concerts on the 16th-century Baroque pipe organ are held at 8pm on Thursday in June, July and August. It's not unusual for the cathedral to be closed on Saturday for weddings, particularly in spring.

ROSKILDE MUSEUM

The well-presented **Roskilde Museum** (☎ 46 31 65 29; www.roskildemuseum.dk; Sankt Olsgade 18; adult/student/child 25/15kr/free; ☎ 11am-4pm) covers Roskilde's history from the Stone Age through Harald Bluetooth's legacy to the contemporary 'rock age' of the Roskilde Festival. The exhibits have been arranged by two Danish artists, meaning that you get aesthetic pleasure along with an education.

PALÆET

The Palace was built in the 18th century, to be used by Christian VI whenever he happened to stop by. Today it houses three galleries/museums, the most worthwhile of which is the **Museet for Samtidskunst** (Museum of Contemporary Art; ☎ 46 31 65 70; www.samtidskunst.dk in Danish; Stændertorvet 3D; adult/student & under 18 30kr/free, free admission Wed; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-4pm Sat & Sun), a small modern art museum with surprising international exhibits.

Sleeping

Roskilde has limited accommodation for its size; being so close to Copenhagen, it's a popular day-trip destination. Tourist office staff book rooms in private homes for around 300/500kr for singles/doubles, plus a 25kr booking fee.

Roskilde Camping (☎ 46 75 79 96; www.roskildecamping.dk; Baunehøjvej 7, Veddelev; camp site per person 70kr; ☎ Apr-mid-Sep; bus 603) Beautifully situated on the edge of Roskilde Fjord, 4km north of the Viking Ship Museum, this three-star camping ground

is family-friendly with good facilities. There's a sandy Blue-Flag beach on the doorstep, and you can hire kayaks for 75/375kr per hour/day from Himmel & Hav (☎ 61 12 60 77; www.himmel-hav.dk; Baunehøjvej 9; open 10am to 7pm from mid-March to mid-September) next door. It's a 20-minute bus ride (19kr) from town.

Danhostel Roskilde (☎ 46 35 21 84; www.danhostel.dk/roskilde in Danish; Vindeboder 7; dm/fr 125/400kr; ☎ year-round; (P)) This modernist hostel is right next door to the Viking Ship Museum. Each of the 40 large rooms has its own shower and toilet, but at times the hotel feels a little unloved – some rooms smell damp, and the vending machines have been broken whenever we've stayed. Bikes are available for 50kr per day.

Svogerslev Kro Hotel (☎ 46 38 30 05; www.svogerslevkro.dk; Svogerslev Hovedgade 45; s/d 700/900kr; (P); bus 602) In a romantic red half-timbered building, this thatched inn is 4km west of town. Despite the old-fashioned façade the interior is modern. Rooms look onto the garden, and there's a Danish/French restaurant, open daily for lunch and dinner. By public transport, it's a 20-minute bus ride (19kr).

Hotel Prindsen (☎ 46 30 91 00; www.prindsen.dk; Algade 13; s/d from 1250/1350kr; (P) (Q)) First opened in 1695, the centrally located Prindsen is Denmark's oldest hotel. It has a guest list that reads like a who's who of great Danes, from King Frederik VII to Hans Christian Andersen. Rooms are different sizes and have varied décor, but all have modern amenities and include breakfast. The deluxe rooms, decorated in Scandinavian style with heated wooden flooring, have more personality than the rather bland standard rooms. Internet connection is available via your TV.

Eating

Restaurant Bryggergården (☎ 46 35 01 03; Algade 15; sandwiches 50-60kr, mains 100-175kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) French and Danish cuisine is served in this busy pub-restaurant. There's a good choice of traditional open sandwiches (shooting stars, roast-beef-and-remoulade, curried herring), plus solid, slightly old-fashioned dishes such as boeuf Bearnaise, roast pork and fish and chips.

Gringos (☎ 46 36 14 47; Hestetorvet 10; taco lunch 59kr, mains 100-150kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) Parachuting clowns, a desert mural and rainbow seats add a cheerfully tacky backdrop to your meal. The all-you-can-eat taco lunch at this Mexican restaurant is a good deal, service is really

friendly, and the burritos thick and juicy. They also do food to take away.

Raadhus-Kælderen (☎ 46 36 01 00; www.raadhuskaelderen.dk; Stændertorvet; lunch mains 60-100kr, dinner mains 180-230kr; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; (Q)) One of Roskilde's best restaurants is this atmospheric spot in the cellar of the old town hall (c 1430). Herring platters, and open sandwiches with smoked venison, beef tartare and smoked eel feature on the lunch menu. At dinner, creative, French-inspired seafood and meat dishes, such as guinea-fowl with rosemary sauce, get an outing. Little for vegetarians.

Café Ce Ci (☎ 46 38 48 78; www.ce-ci.dk; Stændertorvet; lunch mains 70-100kr, dinner mains 190kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) Ce Ci is a trendy, fashionable café right on the main square, with cathedral views. It's a good place to sit and people-watch, particularly in summer when it sprouts outdoor seating. There's a sound lunchtime menu of soup, sandwiches, wraps, burgers and salads; and evening bistro-style meals are good too – chicken breast with pesto, braised ham in a Royal Stout sauce, deluxe burgers.

Restaurant Snekken (☎ 46 35 98 16; Vindeboder 16; lunch mains 90-170kr, dinner mains 200-220, sushi menu 90-190kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) Situated by the Viking Ship Museum, Snekken is an upmarket café-bistro sleekly designed in glass, stone and steel. It's great for lunch in summer, when you can sit outside and watch the Viking boats. In

the evening, it becomes two restaurants, one serving sushi and sashimi (open weekdays only) and the other classic dishes such as foie gras and buttery grilled plaice.

Getting There & Around

Trains between Copenhagen and Roskilde are frequent (66.50kr, 25 minutes). Trains also run to Køge (38kr, 25 minutes) and Næstved (51kr, 42 minutes).

If you're coming from Copenhagen by car, Rte 21 leads to Roskilde. Upon approaching the city, exit onto Rte 156, which leads into the centre. There are car parks south of Strandberg Supermarket and down by the Viking Ship Museum.

Bicycles can be hired from **Jupiter** (☎ 46 35 04 20; Gullandsstræde 3; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) and from the hostel for 50kr per day.

LEJRE

The superb experimental archaeology centre outside Lejre (a tiny village 8km southwest of Roskilde) is like nothing we've ever seen. Combine it with a visit to the palace Ledreborg Slot for a full day's outing.

Sights

LEJRE FORSØGSCENTER

The experimental archaeology centre **Lejre Forsøgscenter** (☎ 46 48 08 78; www.lejre-center.dk;

ROSKILDE ROCKS

Denmark's answer to Glastonbury, **Roskilde Festival** (☎ 46 36 66 13; www.roskilde-festival.dk) is northern Europe's largest music festival. This four-day-long binge of bands and booze rocks Roskilde every summer on the last weekend in June.

Since 1971, it has attracted the biggest and best international performers – some 170+ rock, techno and world-music bands play on seven stages. The line-up in 2007 included Arctic Monkeys, Beastie Boys, Björk, The Flaming Lips, The Killers, Klaxons, Muse, Queens of the Stone Age and The Who...you get the picture! The promoters are astute at trend-spotting, so expect to see hot new bands who haven't yet come into the spotlight.

Obviously the music is the main thing, but there are plenty of other entertainments, including a cinema, swimming lake and skatepark, plus yoga, dance workshops, art events and science projects. Many people camp from the Sunday before the festival starts, spending four days 'warming up' for the festival proper. Stalls sell everything from tattoos to fast food but you may want to bring some food supplies as prices are high.

Tickets cost around 1475kr. They can be purchased in Denmark through **BilletNet** (www.billetnet.dk), at Danish post offices or online at the official concert website. If lugging your own tent along seems bothersome, more expensive tickets (from 2150kr) are available that include a pre-pitched tent. There's a drunken-moron tradition of setting fire to tents at the end of the festival – beware.

Advance sales start in early December and all 75,000 tickets are usually sold by June. However, you can still get a taste of the fun by buying one of the unlimited tickets (650kr) sold on the gate on the last day of the festival.

Slangealleen 2; adult/3-14yr 100/60kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Jul-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm May, Jun & mid-Aug-mid-Sep) is an absolutely fascinating place. Here, enthusiastic re-enactors use ancient technology to test out various theories: How many people does it take to build a dolmen? What plants might have been used to dye clothing? And how do you stop the goats eating your reed roof?

The landscape at Lejre is just beautiful, with rolling hills and lake-filled hollows. A 3km-long path takes you past a Viking Age marketplace, prehistoric burial mounds, a dancing labyrinth, the Iron Age village 'Lethra', through fields of ancient crops, down to a sacrificial pool, and over precarious staked-wood bridges.

Kids can let loose in the hands-on Fire Valley, paddling dug-out canoes, attempting to work a fire drill, baking flatbread, and (ooo, it's hard not to wince) chopping up logs using primitive axes. Roaming aurochs and squelching, munching wild boar add to the fun.

Prices might look steep, but if you take a picnic and possibly some kids who don't mind losing a toe or two, you could easily spend most of the day here.

LEDREBORG SLOT

The grand manor house **Ledreborg Slot** (☎ 46 48 00 38; www.ledreborgslot.dk; Ledreborg Allé; adult/child 75/45kr; ☎ palace noon-3pm, gardens 11am-4pm Jul & Aug,

by tour only 600kr, May, Jun & Sep) is one of Denmark's finest rococo palaces.

The stately home was built and decorated by Count Johan Ludvig Holstein in 1739: the count's descendants still live here, and the house's interior has barely changed in all that time. It's chock-full of curlicued furniture, gilded mirrors, chandeliers, oil paintings and wall tapestries. One of the most impressive rooms is the banquet room. You can also visit the family chapel, kitchens and – a house isn't a home without one – dungeon.

Outside are 80 hectares of gardens, recently restored to their full Baroque glory; and in the woods you'll find the Jungle Path, a series of suspended walkways, ropes, ladders and installations. It's designed for children but is equally fun for adults.

Getting There & Away

From Roskilde it's just a short train ride to Lejre station, where bus 233 continues to both Ledreborg Slot and Lejre Forsøgscenter (19kr).

By car, from Roskilde take Ringstedvej (Rte 14), turn right on Rte 156 and then almost immediately turn left onto Ledreborg Allé. Follow the signs to Ledreborg, 6km away, where a long drive lined by old elm trees leads to the entrance. Lejre Forsøgscenter is 2km further west along the same road.