

Funen



Funen (Fyn) is engagingly pretty, with rural scenery, thatched farmhouses and a surprisingly varied set of attractions. The chirpy modern city of Odense is Hans Christian Andersen crazy – sculptures of trolls lounge on street corners, duckling-and-swan mobiles dangle from gift shop windows, and even the lights at pedestrian crossings feature a certain well-known fairy-tale writer. Even if you scoff at fantastical fabrications, Odense will have something to hold you – old steam engines, manatees at the zoo, imposing churches and cathedrals, art galleries, open-air museums and chilled-out boat rides on the river. Who needs Copenhagen?

The region's castles include Nyborg Slot, palatial Valdemars Slot on the island of Tåsinge, Tranekær Slot on Langeland, whose surrounding parkland holds the brilliant Tickon sculpture park, and the absolutely unmissable Egeskov Slot, a Renaissance masterpiece whose grounds are a family paradise of mazes, antique vehicles, playgrounds and a tree-top walk.

At Ladby, you'll find Denmark's only Viking ship grave and at the northernmost tip of the peninsula is Fyns Hoved, connected by a narrow causeway to the rest of Funen. You can walk to the edge of its 25m-high cliffs (high by Danish standards), from where there's a view of the northern coast and, on a clear day, Jutland and Zealand as well.

The county includes about 90 islands, and there's immense pleasure to be had in hopping between them by ferry, yacht or charter boat. The loveliest is Ærø, with historic seafaring towns, although Langeland has its own unusual attractions, including the fascinating Lange-landsfort, a Cold War military installation. There are also countless smaller islands good for bird-watching and uninterrupted peace.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cut loose at **Egeskov Slot** (p212), a splendid moat-encircled Renaissance castle with a garden full of mazes, museums and marvels
- Explore the fairy-tale world of Hans Christian Andersen in Odense, at the excellent **HC Andersens Hus** (p201) museum and the children's cultural centre **Fyrtojet** (p201)
- Visit Denmark's only Viking Age ship grave, **Vikingemuseet Ladby** (p211), last resting place of a 10th-century chieftain
- Sail away to one of the country's friendliest islands, gorgeous **Ærø** (p224), with undulating country lanes perfect for cycling
- Don camouflage and descend into the bunkers and battleships at **Langelandsfort** (p223)



ODENSE

pop 152,060

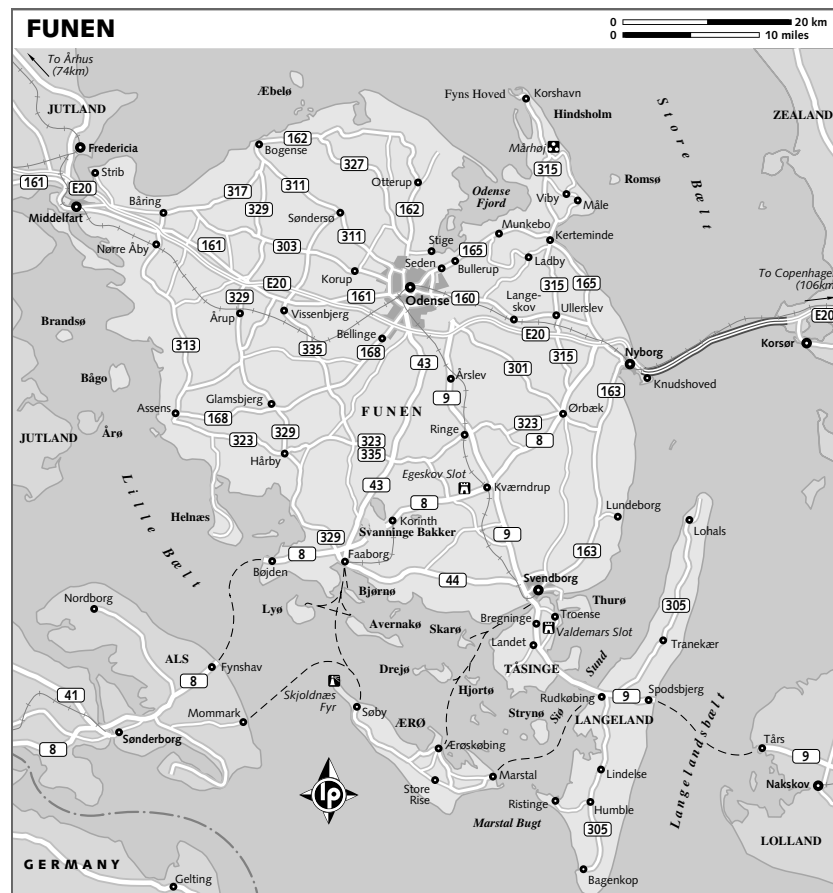
Funen's 1000-year-old capital is a cheerful place, welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists. The city makes much ado about being the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen – although Andersen fled the city after his poverty-stricken childhood here – and fairy-tale fans will be delighted by the preponderance of Andersen-related attractions. These range from several museums dedicated to the man to sculptures of his most famous stories, plus surprises such as public benches with monsters' claws for legs!

More generally, there's a rich concentration of galleries and museums, an impressive

cathedral with a saint's bones in the basement, a thriving café culture, a colourful Flower Festival in mid-August and, of course, city thrills such as an arts cinema and nightclubs, a treat if you've been in the countryside for a while.

Odense translates as 'Odin's shrine' and surely has been blessed by the chief Nordic god of war, poetry and wisdom. Despite having no harbour, Odense was Denmark's largest provincial town by the middle of the 18th century. In 1800, it was finally linked to the sea by a large canal. The city went from strength to strength, becoming an important textile centre.

Odense is a transportation hub for the region.



the art room. All materials are included in the admission price.

HC Andersens Barndomshjem

In the city centre, **HC Andersens Barndomshjem** (Munkemøllestræde 3; adult/under 18yr 25kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 11am-3pm Tue-Sun mid-Aug–mid-Jun) has a couple of rooms of mildly diverting exhibits in the small house where Andersen spent much of his childhood.

Brandts Klædefabrik

The former textile mill on Brandts Passage has been converted into a sprawling cultural centre and cinema, **Brandts Klædefabrik** (☎ 65 20 70 00; www.brandts.dk; adult combined ticket 70kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun), with a photography museum, modern art gallery and exhibition tracing the history of the Danish media. Bright and capacious, it holds around 25 changing exhibitions annually by artists from all over the world. People aged under 18 are admitted free.

Museet for Fotokunst (Museum of Photographic Art; adult 35kr), dedicated to the photographic arts, has both permanent and temporary collections by national and international practitioners.

Kunsthallen Brandts (Art Gallery; adult 40kr), the modern art gallery, has four large halls focusing on new trends in the visual arts. Thought provoking and ever-changing displays include paintings, sculptures, installations and exhibits on Scandinavian design.

Danmarks Mediemuseum (Danish Media Museum; adult 35kr) traces the development of printing in Denmark over the last three centuries. One section covers lithography, engraving, book-binding and paper-making; the other section concentrates on newspaper production. Commentary is mostly in Danish.

Fyns Kunstmuseum

In a stately neoclassical building, the **Fyns Kunstmuseum** (☎ 66 14 88 14; Jernbanegade 13; adult/under 18yr 40kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun) has a serene atmosphere and contains a quality collection of Danish art from the 18th century to the present, chronologically arranged. Highlights include Gustava Emilie Grüner's cheerful *Portraetgruppe Familien Leunbach* and HA Brendekilde's harrowing, powerful *Udslidt*, ('Worn Out'), depicting a dead farm worker and distressed woman in a vast, flat field. Changing exhibitions are also staged.

Carl Nielsen Museet

In Odense's concert hall, **Carl Nielsen Museet** (☎ 65 51 46 01; Claus Bergs Gade 11; admission free; ☎ noon-4pm Fri-Sun Jun-Aug, 2-5pm Mon-Wed Sep-May) details the career of the city's native son Carl Nielsen (1865–1931), Denmark's best known composer.

Nielsen escaped a poor childhood by becoming a trumpet player in Odense's military band at 14, before studying at the Copenhagen Conservatory. In 1888, his first orchestral work, *Suite for Strings*, was performed at the Tivoli concert hall to great acclaim. Nielsen's music includes six symphonies, several operas and numerous hymn tunes and popular songs.

The museum also details the life of sculptor Anne Marie Brodersen, with whom Nielsen had a tempestuous marriage. Displays include Brodersen's works and studio, and Nielsen's study and piano. At various points there are earphones to enjoy Nielsen's music.

Bymuseet Møntergården

Odense's city museum, **Bymuseet Møntergården** (☎ 65 51 46 01; Overgade 48-50; adult/under 18yr 25kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun), is in a courtyard of half-timbered Renaissance houses. The 'Creative Man' exhibition on the ground floor focuses on Funen's very early cultural history, while upstairs there are nice Stone, Bronze, Iron and Viking Age finds, including a lur (a snaking bronze instrument sounding like a trombone).

Danmarks Jernbanemuseum

Clamber aboard a diverting collection of 19th-century locomotives at **Danmarks Jernbanemuseum** (☎ 66 13 66 30; www.jernbanemuseum.dk; Dannebrogsgade 24; adult/5-13yr 60/24kr; ☎ 10am-4pm), just behind the train station. The museum has about two dozen engines and wagons, including double-decker carriages and the Royal Saloon Car belonging to Christian IX, fully kitted out with everything a king might need – even a writing desk. There's also a huge collection of Märklin model trains, and a separate exhibition about Denmark's ferries. Audiovisual explanations are in English, German and Danish.

Den Fynske Landsby

A delightful open-air museum, **Den Fynske Landsby** (☎ 65 51 46 01; Sejerskovvej 20; adult/under 18yr 60kr/free; ☎ 10am-7pm Jul–mid-Aug, 10am-5pm

Tue-Sun Apr-Jun & mid-Aug–mid-Oct, 11am-3pm Sun mid-Oct–Mar) has borrowed period houses from around Funen and laid them out to create a small country village, complete with barnyard animals, a duck pond, apple trees and flower gardens. Costumed 'peasants' tend to the geese, while children in knickerbockers play with hoops and sticks.

The museum is in a green zone 4km south of the city centre: city bus 42 (17kr, 25 minutes) runs nearby. The best way to get there, though, is by boat (May to mid-September only) – see Munke Mose & Odense Åfart Boat Trips (below).

Jernalderlandsbyen

Slip back through the millennia at **Jernalderlandsbyen** (☎ 66 18 09 87; www.jernalderlandsbyen.dk; Store Klaus 40, Næsby; adult/6-14yr 25/10kr; ☎ 10am-4pm Sun-Fri Jul–mid-Aug, 8.30am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, to 2pm Fri mid-Aug–Jun), a smaller scale (than Den Fynske Landsby) Iron Age village built using methods gleaned from archaeological finds. The village is 5km northwest of the city – take bus 91 or 810 (24kr, 10 minutes).

Odense Zoo

Denmark's second largest zoo (☎ 66 11 13 60; www.odensezoo.dk; Sønder Blvd 306; adult/3-11yr 130/70kr; ☎ 10am-7pm Jul–mid-Aug, 10am-5pm Apr-Jun & mid-Aug–Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar) borders the river, 2km south of the city centre. The animals generally have large enclosures and the zoo supports conservation and educational programmes. It's home to tigers, lions, giraffes, zebras, chimpanzees and African birds, and there's an 'oceanium' with penguins and – the zoo's biggest attraction – manatees. Children can also enjoy petting donkeys, a playground and lots of animal related games.

Admittance to the zoo stops one hour before closing time; at certain periods, the zoo opens late on Thursday, Friday and Saturday – check the website for details.

Odense Åfart (below) stops at the zoo during the peak season. City buses 11, 12, 31, 81, 82 and S3 (17kr, 10 minutes) run there frequently, or you could walk the 2km-long wooded riverside path that begins at Munke Mose.

Munke Mose & Odense Åfart Boat Trips

The riverside **Munke Mose park** is an attractive place for a picnic, stroll or boat trip. From May to mid-September, **Odense Åfart** (☎ 66 10 70 80; www.aafart.dk; adult/under 12yr return 60/40kr) runs 35-minute river rides to the wooded Fruens

Bøge area, where there's a 'nature playground' full of giant wooden toadstools and centipedes. From here, it's a 15-minute walk to Den Fynske Landsby. The boat stops at Odense Zoo en route.

On Saturday in the high summer, the experience is enriched by live jazz music onboard (booking advised). Trips leave Munke Mose on the hour from 10am to 5pm. People in non-motorised wheelchairs can travel on the boats.

Independent types can paddle their own crafts in Munke Mose park, with rowing boats and swan-shaped pedaloes (75kr per hour) for hire between 10am and 5pm, May to mid-September.

WALKING TOUR

A leisurely walk is the best way to explore the city. If you stop to enjoy the attractions on the following route, it could easily take you a full day.

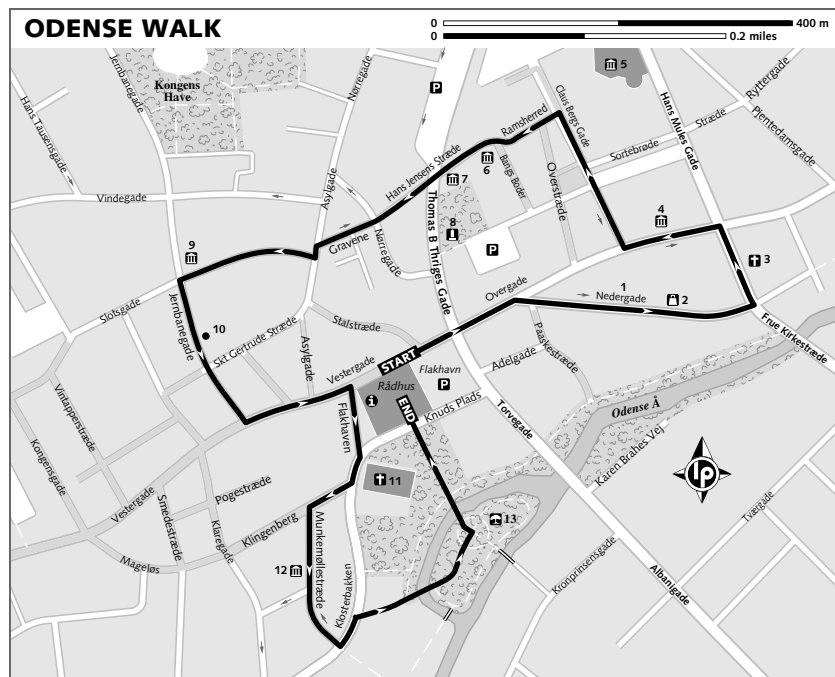
From rådhus (the 1950s town hall) head east on Vestergade, which becomes Overgade, and then turn right onto **Nedergade (1)**, a cobblestone street with leaning half-timbered houses and antique shops. These shops include **Kramboden (2)** (☎ 66 11 45 22; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat), an olde-worde merchant's house selling toys and utensils from bygone days.

At the end of Nedergade, a left onto Frue Kirkestræde will bring you to **Vor Frue Kirke (3)**; ☎ 10am-2pm Mon-Fri), traditionally the oldest church in Odense, although records confirming this are hazy. Most of the whitewashed interior dates back to the 13th century.

From Vor Frue Kirke turn left back onto Overgade; you'll soon reach **Bymuseet Møntergården (4)**; opposite), the city museum. Turn right into Claus Bergs Gade, where you'll pass the city's only casino. Immediately north is the **Odense Koncerthus (5)**; p207), with a museum dedicated to composer Carl Nielsen.

Just past the casino, turn left onto Ramsherred (which quickly changes into Hans Jensens Stræde) to reach **HC Andersens Hus (6)**; p201), Hans Christian Andersen's birthplace, and the children's centre **Fyrtojet (7)**; p201). The museum is in a pleasant neighbourhood of narrow cobbled streets and tiled houses. There's a peaceful **park and duck pond (8)** to the south.

Continue down Hans Jensens Stræde, cross Thomas B Thriges Gade and follow



Gravene to Slotsgade; **Fyns Kunstmuseum (9;** p202), Odense's notable fine arts museum, is on the corner of Slotsgade and Jernbanegade. Turn left and proceed down Jernbanegade to Vestergade. Along the way you'll pass the site of **Gråbrødre Kloster (10)**, a medieval Franciscan monastery now a home for the elderly.

Reaching Vestergade, turn east back to rådhus and then go south to **Sankt Knuds Kirke (11;** p201), Odense's intriguing cathedral. Opposite the cathedral, turn down Sankt Knuds Kirkestræde and then go south on Munkemøllestræde, where you'll pass **HC Andersen Barndomshjem (12;** p202), the writer's childhood home.

Loop back around on Klosterbakken and take the path into the **HC Andersen Haven (13)**, a riverside park with a prominent statue of the author. You can walk north through the park to get back to rådhus.

SLEEPING

The tourist office books rooms in private homes for around 300/450kr for singles/doubles, plus a 35kr booking fee.

Budget

DCU Camping Odense (☎ 66 11 47 02; www.camping-odense.dk; Odensevej 102; adult/child/tent 68/43/40kr; 🚻 🚿) A neat three-star camping ground in a wooded area, with TV lounge, outdoor swimming pool, wireless internet access, shop and kids' amusements. There are several simple cabins for rent (420kr per night) with kitchenettes and shared bathrooms. The camping ground is 3.5km south of the city centre – take bus 22.

Danhostel Odense Kragssbjerggaard (☎ 66 13 04 25; Kragssbjergvej 121; dm 150kr, s/d 350/490kr; 🚻 Mar-Nov; 📺 📺) Kragssbjerggaard is an attractive hostel in an exclusive suburb 2km southeast of the centre. It's based in a historic manor house, built around a cobbled courtyard and garden. The renovated interior contains modern, mostly four-bed rooms all with washbasins. Dorm beds are available in the high season. There's a washing machine and kitchen. Take city bus 61, 62, 63 or 64.

Danhostel Odense City (☎ 63 11 04 25; www.cityhostel.dk; Østre Stationsvej 31; dm 160kr, s/d 360/470kr; 🚻 Feb–mid-Dec; 📺) This central modern 140-bed hostel has accommodation in (extremely

small) four- and six-bed dorms, each with its own bathroom. There's a guest kitchen, laundry facilities and a basement TV room with internet access (10kr per 15 minutes). The hostel is alongside the train and bus stations, perfect for early journeys but noisy at night.

Midrange

Ansgarhus Motel (☎ 66 12 88 00; www.ansgarhus.dk; Kirkegårds Allé; s/d 445/575kr, with shared bathroom 350/495kr; 📺 📺) A small, family-run place near the river and parkland with clean, welcoming rooms. Most have private bathrooms, but there are four singles that don't. Free wi-fi.

Det Lille Hotel (☎ 66 12 28 21; Dronningensgade 5; s/d incl breakfast 450/550kr, with shared bathroom 275/450kr) Located a leisurely 10-minute walk west of the train station, this is a small and inexpensive hotel on a quiet street. The 14 standard rooms are a little scruffy, but the owners are friendly and openly welcome families.

Ydes Hotel (☎ 66 12 11 31; www.ydes.dk; Hans Tausensgade 11; s/tw/d/tr 495/595/695/745kr; 📺 📺) With the same owners as the Domir, next-door Ydes has 26 smaller, spotlessly clean rooms. Rooms are similar, as are internet and parking conditions.

Hotel Domir (☎ 66 12 14 27; www.domir.dk; Hans Tausensgade 19; s/tw/d/tr incl breakfast 545/595/695/795kr; 📺 📺) One of the better midrange options, a short walk from the train station. Pleasant good-value rooms, done out in simple white, all have phone, desk, TV and bathroom; some singles are cramped. There's free wi-fi and a computer in the lobby. The car park only holds six cars.

City Hotel (☎ 66 12 12 58; www.city-hotel-odense.dk; Hans Mules Gade 5; s/d incl breakfast 695/995kr; 📺 📺) A comfortable modern hotel near HC Andersen Hus museum. Inoffensive rooms have settees and full amenities (satellite TV, alarm clock, hairdryer etc). Other pluses include wireless internet, a roof terrace with city views, a good breakfast, friendly staff and a private car park. There's no restaurant, but guests get discounts at Den Gamle Kro (p206).

Top End

We were surprised at the standard of Odense's top-end hotels, mostly belonging to large chains. If you're shelling out 1000+ kroner per night, you'd certainly hope for more. Go with low expectations, or perhaps on week-

ends when prices are dropped. Prices include breakfast.

Hotel Ansgar (☎ 66 11 96 93; www.hotel-ansgar.dk; Østre Stationsvej 32; s/d 895/1045kr; 📺 📺) Ansgar is typical of Odense's big hotels – dated and in sore need of repainting. The rooms we visited smelt slightly damp. On the plus side, it's handy for the station, and there's a big buffet breakfast. The hotel has parking – pick up a pass from reception. There's wi-fi and a web-connected computer in reception.

First Hotel Grand (☎ 66 11 71 71; www.firsthotels.dk; Jernbanegade 18; s/d from 1125/1325kr; 📺 📺) An old-fashioned hotel that's been around for 100 years – and looks as though it has! Orangey furnishings and brass lamp-stands could be deemed 'retro', but there's no excuse for those carpet stains. There's a sauna and solarium, wi-fi access and parking for 50kr per 24 hours. The restaurant opens from September to May.

Clarion Collection Hotel Plaza (☎ 66 11 77 45; www.choicehotels.dk; Østre Stationsvej 24; s/d 1175/1375kr; 📺 📺) Overlooking the green spaces of Kongens, the Clarion is good on service but low on smartness. Bathrooms are neat and clean, but bedrooms, decorated in a pastoral 'Old English' style, really need renovating. There's wi-fi access, a gym and a sunroom where a better-than-average breakfast is served. Collect a parking voucher from reception.

Radisson SAS HC Andersen Hotel (☎ 66 14 78 00; www.radisson.com/odensedk; Claus Bergs Gade 7; s/d from 1295/1495kr; 📺 📺) You might not get an enthusiastic welcome at the Radisson, but rooms here have actually been refurbished with living memory. The rooms are decent enough: illustrations from Hans Christian Andersen stories on the walls, flowery settees, neat green-tiled bathrooms, a safe and a mini-fridge. There's wi-fi and an internet-connected computer. Ask reception for a parking voucher.

EATING

The pedestrianised main street Vestergade contains several moderately priced restaurants and cafés, and there's a cluster of buzzing bars/bistros around Kongensgade and in Brandts Passage. Many stay open until at least midnight (often 2am or 3am on the weekend), but for drinking only. Kitchens stop taking food orders at 9pm or 10pm.

Budget

You'll find fast-food outlets all over the city, especially along Kongensgade. On Wednesday

and Saturday morning there's a produce market along Claus Bergs Gade, the pedestrian street that runs south from the Odense Koncerthus. The train station contains a small grocery store that opens until midnight and a good bakery with a sit-down section.

Royal Bakery (Vestergadevej 28; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 7.30pm Fri, to 4pm Sat) This bakery, situated on the main pedestrian street near the tourist bureau, is the best in town for Danish pastries and tasty organic ice cream.

Mamma's Deli (☎ 66 13 13 03; Klaregade 12; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, to 3pm Sat) Attached to a pizza restaurant, this deli sells a wide choice of upmarket treats for picnickers – dried meats, cheese, marinated vegetables, strong coffee and freshly prepared *panini*.

China Box (☎ 66 20 62 44; Vestergade; small/large takeaway boxes 30/45kr; ☎ 11am-9pm Mon-Sat) Close to the tourist office, this takeaway does inexpensive noodles and Chinese buffet food, served in paper boxes.

El Torito (☎ 66 13 02 02; Vestergade 21; snacks 35-70kr; ☎ 11am-9pm Mon-Sat, noon-9pm Sun) The Mexican restaurant El Torito has a little takeaway section at the back, where you can buy wraps, nachos and burritos.

Bazar Fyn (☎ 66 14 42 44; Thriges Plads 3-7; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) Odense's brand-new bazaar, about five minutes' walk from the train station. Barter for exotic Arabic cakes, Turkish bread, fresh figs, coconuts and spiced couscous.

Midrange

Mona Rosa (☎ 65 91 49 13; Vintapperstræde 4; lunch mains 60kr, dinner mains 110kr, steaks 130-160kr; ☎ noon-10pm) A cosy Mexican restaurant near Brandts Passage, Mona Rosa's day menu (chilli con carne and burritos) lengthens in the evening to include hefty steaks, accompanied by a help-yourself salad bar. In summer there are tables in a cosy courtyard between half-timbered houses.

Café Cuckoo's Nest (☎ 65 91 57 87; www.cuckoos.dk; Vestergade 73; light lunches 60-90kr, dinner mains 130-160kr; ☎ 9am-late) A mid-priced place where you can go for breakfast and stay until the wee hours, Cuckoo's Nest does everything from scrambled eggs to cocktails. There's open courtyard seating, backgammon sets and occasional live blues and jazz. Veggies should double-check ingredients, as fish sometimes counts as a vegetable.

Froggy's Café (☎ 65 90 74 47; Vestergade 68; light mains 65-80kr; ☎ 11am-late) A good people-watching

spot overlooking the main pedestrian street, Froggy's has an all-day menu of reasonably priced burgers, pastas, omelettes and salads. It's a late-opening nightspot on Friday and Saturday, when punters are shown the door at 5am. Sunday morning offers a restorative brunch (89kr).

Milos (☎ 66 11 28 66; Magelos 7; lunch/dinner mains 65/110-150kr; ☎ noon-10pm) Rare in Denmark, the Greek taverna is represented in Odense by Milos. Its fresh white interior is populated by charming waiters. The long menu incorporates Greek favourites such as moussaka, souvlaki and keftedes – a welcome change from open sandwiches. Veggies can tuck into *pikilia* (a tapas-style selection of feta-filled spinach tarts, stuffed peppers and dolmades).

Café Biografen (☎ 66 13 16 16; Brandts Passage; brunch 79kr, light mains 60-100kr; ☎ 11am-midnight) Ducks waddle around terrace tables at this cheerful place beside the Brandts Klædefabrik cultural centre. The café does a decent selection of baguettes, salads, quiches, burgers, tapas and *tostadas*, plus coffee, cakes and beer. Its varied clientele, from little old ladies to moody-looking artists, makes for great people-watching. Order at the bar.

our pick Kræz Night & Day (☎ 66 11 38 11; Gråbrødre Plads 6; light mains 80-150kr; ☎ 10am-late) A night-time venue for live music, comedy, karaoke and lectures, this is also one for a summer's day – outdoor tables merge with those of several other restaurants around pedestrianised Gråbrødre Plads to form a convivial mass of diners. Food is bistro-style – soup, Greek salad, burgers, Mexican platters, baked salmon etc – but served in monster portions and with tasty twists. A decadent weekend brunch includes chocolate brownies. Service can be slow.

Asia House (☎ 66 12 19 24; Østre Stationsvej 40; mains 100-140kr, buffet 148kr; ☎ from 6pm Tue-Sun) This eatery, apparently the oldest Thai restaurant in Scandinavia, is worth a visit for its delicious authentic food. Among the spicy chicken, pork and beef dishes are three vegetarian mains. The best time is Friday or Saturday night, when there's a grand buffet spread.

Top End

our pick Den Gamle Kro (☎ 66 12 14 33; www.den-gamle-kro.dk; Overgade 23; sandwiches 70-130kr, mains 170-300kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) The atmospheric Gamle Kro spreads through several 17th-century houses, with a glass-roofed courtyard and

medieval cellar. Traditional Danish (eg fillet of sole stuffed with salmon and spinach) and French (eg Chateaubriand or pork with Lyonnaise potatoes) recipes are mostly meat-based, but there's usually one veggie main. There's also a huge wine list.

Den Grimme Æling (☎ 65 91 70 30; Hans Jensens Stræde 1; lunch buffet without/with drinks 79/125kr, dinner buffet with wine 249kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) A charming restaurant in a cobbled lane, The Ugly Duckling specialises in varied high-quality buffets. One area is set aside for cold ingredients – a rainbow of new potatoes, herring, olives, tomatoes, cucumber, sweet corn, pickled red cabbage and the like. Hot-plate items include fried plaice, succulent lumps of beef and plenty of sauces and gravies.

our pick Restaurant Klitgaard (☎ 66 13 14 55; Gravene 4; 2/3/4 courses 375/435/515kr; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat, closed Jul) This small gourmet place, noted for its use of fresh, locally grown seasonal ingredients, is one of the best places we've eaten in Denmark. The pairings of ingredients are clever (slow-roasted, tender duck breast, with the merest sliver of foie gras for richness) and surprising (like the sensational rhubarb sorbet with pickled rhubarb and lavender oil).

DRINKING

The cafés around Brandts Passage and Vintapperstræde are good for an evening drink. Many stay open until 3am on Friday and Saturday.

Ryan's (☎ 65 91 53 00; Fisketorvet 12) In the evening there's often live Irish folk music at this friendly Irish pub near the tourist bureau, with Guinness and Kilkenny on tap. It's popular with local university students and with footy fans when matches are showing on the big screens.

Den Smagløse Café (Vindegade 47; ☎ 1pm-2am Mon-Sat) A hip little place where a youngish, studenty crowd relaxes on well-worn sofas.

Bryggeriet Flakhaven (☎ 66 12 02 99; Flakhaven; ☎ 11.30am-10pm Mon-Sat, to 3pm Sun) Odense's microbrewery is attached to A Hereford Beef-stout restaurant. You can buy beer to take away (from 110kr per 2L).

ENTERTAINMENT Nightclubs

Boogies (☎ 66 14 00 39; Nørregade 23; ☎ 11pm-5am Thu-Sat) Boogies is a central and very popular dance spot, with a high proportion of student revellers.

Mosaik (☎ 66 11 18 16; Asylgade 7-9; average admission 60kr; ☎ Thu-Sat) A dressier late-night club, Mosaik is big on house and drum and bass.

The Room (☎ 63 13 00 33; Brandts Passage 8; ☎ to 3am Fri & Sat) With affable staff and a sleek modern interior, this bistro also turns into a house-music nightspot on weekends.

Arkaden (☎ 22 47 47 23; Vestergade 68; ☎ 8pm-5am Thu-Sat) This huge purpose-built place contains seven bars around a central square, with karaoke, live music and lots of dancing space.

Cinemas

BioCity (☎ 70 13 12 11; Odense Banegård Center; adult/under 11yr 75/55kr) Denmark's largest cinema screen is inside the multiplex on the 2nd floor of the train station. For the programme, see www.biobooking.dk.

Café Biografen (☎ 66 13 16 16; Brandts Passage 43; admission 70kr) Located at Brandts Klædefabrik, this café shows first-run movies and art-house flicks. For details, see www.cafe.bio.dk.

Gay & Lesbian Venues

Lambda (☎ 40 89 62 49; lambda@lambda.dk) At the time of writing, Odense's gay and lesbian organisation was looking for a new location for its late-night café and monthly club nights. Contact them for the latest information.

Live Music

Dexter's Jazzhus (☎ 63 11 27 28; Vindegade 65; admission usually 50kr; ☎ from 8pm Thu-Sat) The only dedicated jazz venue outside Copenhagen.

Odense Koncerthus (☎ 66 12 44 80; www.odense.symfoni.dk; Claus Bergs Gade 9) Home of the Odense Symphony Orchestra. The classical music programme commonly includes works by native son Carl Nielsen. Ticket prices vary according to the concert – anything from 70kr upwards. The Koncerthus closes from mid-June to mid-August.

Brandts Klædefabrik (☎ 65 20 70 00; Brandts Passage) The open-air amphitheatre across from the arts complex hosts free summertime rock, jazz and blues concerts, usually on Saturday.

Casino Odense (☎ 66 14 78 10; www.casino.odense.dk; Claus Bergs Gade 7; admission 60kr; ☎ 7pm-4am) Try your luck at blackjack, roulette and slot machines inside the Radisson SAS HC Andersen Hotel. Take ID to prove you're over 18.

SHOPPING

Magasin (☎ 66 11 92 11; Vestergade 20; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 8pm Fri, to 5pm Sat) The city's largest and smartest department store, Magasin stocks just about everything, from food delicacies to cosmetics and clothing.

ZanZippe (☎ 66 13 55 05; Sankt Knuds Kirkestræde 2A) For unusual Danish-designed clothing, plus pottery, glass and knick-knacks.

Brandts Indoor (☎ 66 14 53 43; Brandts Passage 27; 🕒 11am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Brandts Indoor sells some homegrown Danish design, including Viking ship mobiles and copies of Hans Christian Andersen's paper cutouts.

Rosengårdcentret (☎ 66 15 91 18; www.rosengaardcentret.dk in Danish; Ørbækvej 75; 🕒 Mon, Thu & Fri 10am-8pm, Tue & Wed to 5.30pm, Sat to 4pm) Mall rats will like the Rosengård centre, 4km southeast of town, with a multiscreen cinema, restaurants and 145 shops.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Odense is 34km west of Nyborg, 44km north-west of Svendborg, 37km northeast of Faaborg and 50km east of the bridge to Jutland.

Bus

Regional buses leave from Dannebrogsgade 6, at the rear of the train station. **Fynbus** (www.fynbus.dk) runs bus services from Odense to all major towns on Funen – see individual destinations for bus information.

Car & Motorcycle

Odense is connected to Nyborg by Rte 160 and the E20, to Kerteminde by Rte 165, to Jutland by the E20, to Faaborg by Rte 43 and to Svendborg by Rte 9.

Car rental companies in town:

Avis (☎ 66 14 39 99; Østre Stationsvej 37)

PS Bilundejning (☎ 66 14 00 00; Ruggårdsvej 1) A competitive local option (from 425kr per day) if you don't need to drop the car in another town.

Train

There's a **ticket office** (🕒 6.30am-8.15pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4.30pm Sat, 9am-8.15pm Sun) on the 2nd floor of the train station complex, and plenty of automatic machines.

Odense is accessible by the main railway line between Copenhagen (218kr, 1½ hours), Århus (190kr, 1¾ hours), Aalborg (291kr, three hours) and Esbjerg (172kr, two hours). Trains between Odense and Copenhagen stop at Nyborg (43kr, 20 minutes).

The only other train route in Funen is the hourly run between Odense and Svendborg (61kr, one hour).

GETTING AROUND

Bicycle

In central Odense, bicycles can be rented at **City Cykler** (☎ 66 13 97 83; www.citycykler.dk; Vesterbro 27; 🕒 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat), west of the city centre, for 99kr per day. **Per's Cykler & Knallerter** (☎ 66 14 84 85; Vesterbro 95) is further down the same road and better if you're on a budget – bikes are 50kr per day.

Alternatively, get a person with calves of steel to pedal you about. **Cycle-taxi tours** (☎ 28 12 75 13; bestilling@pers-cykeltaxi.dk; 🕒 May-Oct), of Odense centre, cost a base rate of 40kr, plus 3kr per minute after that.

Odense is an innovative city as far as bikes go. There are lockable bike sheds, several paths have speed cameras and a cycle counter just east of the tourist bureau tallies passing bicycles – around 8000 per day.

Boat

For boats from Munke Mose park in Odense to the zoo or Den Fynske Landsby, see p203.

Bus

In Odense, board city buses at the front and pay the driver (17kr) when you get off – exact change is recommended. The main transit point for city buses is in front of Sankt Knuds Kirke. All city buses except 71 also pass through the bus station behind the Odense Banegård Center.

Car & Motorcycle

Outside rush hour, driving in Odense is not difficult, but many central sights are on pedestrian streets. It's best to park your car and explore on foot.

Near the city centre, there's metered parking along the streets (come with lots of change). Spaces fill quickly, but there are substantial car parks around Brandts Klædefabrik, the Carl Nielsen Museet and by the train station. Parking costs around 13kr for one hour.

Taxi

Taxis are readily available at the train station, or you can order one by phoning **Odense Taxi** (☎ 66 15 44 15).

AROUND FUNEN ISLAND

Woodlands and wheat fields claim most of Funen, with surprises hiding in the rural landscape – a Viking ship slumbering in an isolated mound, the fairy-tale castle Egeskov, an enigmatic 2000-year-old passage grave.

Funen's sleepy towns curl themselves around fortified mansions and medieval houses. Offshore, scattered islets are home to small communities – sometimes of people, sometimes just birds, rabbits and deer. Things live up in the largest settlement, Svendborg, whose bars and cafés are popular with visiting yachties.

NYBORG

pop 16,043

Most people zip over the Store Bælt bridge and rattle right past Nyborg, the easternmost town on Funen. However, it's worth turning off the E20 and spending a few hours here.

The most appealing part of town is around the main square, a 10-minute walk west of the train station, where there are the remains of a medieval castle and some classic half-timbered houses. White-sand beaches await 1.5km east of the centre.

Information

Nyborg Turistbureau (☎ 65 31 02 80; www.visitnyborg.dk; Torvet 9; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat mid-Jun-Aug, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat Sep-mid-Jun)

Sights

NYBORG SLOT

The main sight is **Nyborg Slot** (☎ 65 31 02 07; www.museer-nyborg.dk; Slotsholmen; adult/under 18yr 30kr/free, combined ticket with Mads Lerches Gård 45kr/free; 🕒 10am-4pm Jun & Aug, to 5pm Jul, to 3pm Apr, May, Sep & Oct), one of half a dozen 12th-century fortresses built to secure Denmark's coast.

In 1282 Erik V signed an important charter here, establishing Denmark's first constitution and an annual parliament known as the Danehof, which sat at the castle until 1413. Nyborg was a royal residence for centuries, until it was damaged and abandoned after the 1658–59 Danish-Swedish wars.

The fortress once had a defensive wall and four corner towers but only part of the original structure remains. Two towers fell victim to earlier modifications, and in 1870 most of the

ramparts were torn down so the town could expand. Still, what does remain is fun to explore. The Danehof room has walls repainted with a 16th-century, three-dimensional cube design that seems strikingly contemporary. Old royal paintings, suits of armour, antique guns and swords lend atmosphere to the bare-bones interior. You can walk past the machicolations in the loft, and visit mummified cats in the cellar.

MADS LERCHES GÅRD

A lopsided 17th-century merchant's house, **Mads Lerches Gård** (☎ 65 31 02 07; Slotsgade 11; adult/under 18yr 30kr/free, combined ticket with Nyborg Slot 45kr/free; 🕒 10am-4pm Jun & Aug, to 5pm Jul, to 3pm Apr, May, Sep & Oct) holds the town museum, which is worth a nosy. Along with toys, craft tools and rooms styled with period furniture, there's a room of local sculptor Carl Aarsleff's models – his most famous work is Queen Margrethe's sarcophagus in Roskilde Domkirke (p132). The house itself has original ceiling decorations and a wide inner courtyard.

VOR FRUE KIRKE

Nyborg's central place of worship, **Vor Frue Kirke** (☎ 65 31 16 08; Korsbrodregade 4; 🕒 8am-6pm Jun-Aug, 9am-4pm Sep-May) dates from 1388 but has been altered many times over the years. Its beautifully detailed black baroque pulpit was carved in 1653. There's also a wrought-iron latticed gateway, forged by Christian IV's favourite smith Caspar Fincke, and a Renaissance font surrounded by fat-bellied wooden figures. Entry is via a small door on the southern side of the building.

Sleeping

The tourist office can book rooms in private homes for around 300/500kr per single/double, plus a 25kr booking fee.

Nyborg Strandcamping (☎ 65 31 02 56; www.strandcamping.dk; Hjejlevej 99; per person 65kr; 🕒 Apr-Sep; 📍) A great camping ground for families, right on a child-friendly white-sand beach. Other pluses include a laundry, shop, internet café, boats for hire (700kr per day) and views of the Store Bælt bridge. It's about 2km east of the town centre – private transport is needed.

Hotel Villa Gulle (☎ 65 30 11 88; www.villa-gulle.dk in Danish; Østervoldgade 44; s/d 445/745kr, with shared bathroom 350/595kr; 📍) This family-run hotel close to the church is the cheapest and most central in Nyborg. Twenty-six straightforward

rooms have either bathrooms or washbasins; all have cable TV. From June to August, you can rent dinghies and canoes (80kr per hour) and paddle on the moat outside.

Hotel Hesselet (☎ 65 31 30 29; www.hesselet.dk; Christianslundsvej 119; s/d incl breakfast 1380/1780kr; (P) (A) (B) (C)) Built in a striking location 2km northeast of town overlooking the Store Bælt bridge, the Hesselet exudes grand style. Public areas include a billiards room and library filled with leather-clad tomes. Rooms are large and cossetting, with big firm beds, and most have ocean views. There's also an indoor swimming pool, tennis courts and two saunas, and wi-fi coverage. Access for people in wheelchairs is good.

Eating

Gertz Konditori (☎ 65 31 00 96; Kongegade 16; light mains 35kr; ☎ 6.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat & Sun) In the heart of town, this bakery doubles as a sandwich shop and café, with pavement tables.

Restaurant Caramba (☎ 65 30 11 03; Slotsgade 9; mains 85-130kr; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat) This little Mexican restaurant, round the corner from the tourist office, has an endearingly amateurish air and very tasty food, although portions are on the small side. Outdoor tables, with castle views, are snapped up quickly. It also opens for lunch from Tuesday to Saturday and dinner on Sunday in summer.

Østervemb Steak & Ribhouse (☎ 65 30 10 70; Mellemgade 18; lunch mains 150kr, dinner mains 200kr; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Østervemb specialises in steaks of all kind, from cow to crocodile, springbok to kangaroo. At the time of writing, the restaurant was undergoing major renovations.

Getting There & Away

Nyborg is on the E20, 34km east of Odense. Trains run about twice an hour between Nyborg and Odense (43kr, 20 minutes). In the other direction, they go over to Zealand towns Korsør (78kr, 12 minutes), Sorø (108kr, 30 minutes), Roskilde (144kr, 55 minutes) and Copenhagen (181kr, 1¼ hours).

KERTEMINDE

pop 5775

Kerteminde is a pleasant seaside town, slightly spoiled by an ugly road system. However, if you're tired of churches and town museums, it's worth visiting for its aquarium, pleasing

yacht-filled harbour, inviting Blue-Flam (an international eco-label for the sustainable development of beaches and marinas) sandy beaches, and for the former home of the 'peasant painter' Johannes Larsen.

Kerteminde is also an ideal base from which to visit the superb Viking ship at Ladby (opposite), or to get away from it all on a boat trip to the uninhabited island of Romsø.

Information

Kerteminde Turistbureau (☎ 65 32 11 21; www.visitkerteminde.dk; Hans Schacksvej 5; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat mid-Jun-Aug, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat Sep-mid-Jun)

Post office (Hans Schacksvej 5) Shares a building with the tourist office.

Sights & Activities

JOHANNES LARSEN MUSEET

At the **Johannes Larsen Museet** (☎ 65 32 11 77; Møllebakken 14; adult/under 18yr 60kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep, Oct & Mar-May, 11am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb) north of town, the artist's former home is now open to the public. Larsen (1867-1961) is known for paintings of wildlife and provincial Danish scenes. You can see them in abundance here, as well as the studio where he painted near obsessively. Next door, his wife Alhed, also an artist, captured the lush blooms of her greenhouse. There's an impressive purpose-built exhibition hall showcasing more of their work, alongside paintings by 50 other artists from the Fyn school. The tiny café at the end of the garden serves good light lunches.

Outside the main entrance is Svanemøllen, a windmill dating from 1853 with wooden cogs and wheels intact, bought by Johannes Larsen along with the house.

Parking spaces are only for people with disabilities. The nearest car park is at the corner of Hindsholmvej and Marinavejen.

FJORD & BÆLT

Down by the harbour is **Fjord & Bælt** (☎ 65 32 42 00; www.fjord-baelt.dk; Margrethes Plads 1; adult/3-11yr 105/55kr; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul & Aug, to 4pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun Sep-Nov & mid-Feb-Jun), a marine centre with aquariums, a 50m-tunnel under the harbour, and seals and porpoises. It's best to go at feeding times, usually around 11am and 2pm on weekdays, plus 12.30pm weekends. Marine biologists can take you on boat and snorkelling trips by arrangement.

BOAT TRIPS TO ROMSØ

The wooded island of Romsø, whose only residents are deer, rabbits and birds, is a mere 30-minute boat ride from Kerteminde. You can walk a 3km coastal trail around the 109-hectare island or just soak up the solitude. Bring a picnic lunch because there are no facilities.

The **Romsø-Båden boat service** (☎ 65 32 13 77; www.romso.dk; adult/under 12yr return 115/70kr) takes passengers to the island on Wednesday and Saturday from April to August, departing Kerteminde at 9am and Romsø at 2pm. Reservations are required.

Sleeping

Kerteminde Camping (☎ 65 32 19 71; www.kertemindecamping.dk; Hindsholmvej 80; per person 66kr; ☎ Apr-Sep; (A)) A three-star camping ground, Kerteminde Camping is 1.5km north of town, close to the beach. Hedges divide the sites into long 'lanes' of caravans and tents.

Danhostel Kerteminde (☎ 65 32 39 29; www.dkhostel.dk; Skovvej 46; dm 150kr, r 500kr; ☎ Jan-mid-Dec; (P) (X) (B)) Nestled by a delightful wooded area, this hostel is a five-minute walk from a sandy beach and 15 minutes' walk south of town. The 30 rooms have a maximum of four beds, with showers and toilets. Dorm beds are available in the high season. Accessible to people in wheelchairs.

Rødkærgård B&B (☎ 65 32 11 23; www.roedkaergaard.dk; Lille Vibyvej 49, Lille Viby; s/d/apt incl breakfast 250/400/650kr) If you have transport, try this courtyarded farmhouse in the hamlet of Lille Viby, 3km west of Kerteminde off Rte 165. Rooms have old-fashioned homely décor, colour TVs and shared bathrooms, while apartments are self-contained, with kitchenettes, washing machines and tumble driers.

Tornøes Hotel (☎ 65 32 16 05; www.tornoeshotel.dk; Strandgade 2; s/d 850/1025kr; (P) (A)) A great harbourside spot in the town centre. Rooms are chain-hotel bland, but all have private bathroom and TV, and the hotel has a restaurant with a super outlook over the fjord. There are often mini-holiday deals, and prices drop considerably out of season. Wi-fi access.

Eating

Restaurant Sejlklub (☎ 65 32 24 53; Marinavejen 2; lunch mains 80-100kr, dinner mains 120-170kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) For affordable waterfront dining, Restaurant Sejlklub at the yacht marina north of town offers Danish beef and seafood dishes. You

can sit indoors or there's patio seating, ideal for a cold beer on a sunny afternoon.

Restaurant Rudolf Mathis (☎ 65 32 32 33; Dosseringen 13; lunch/dinner menus from 365/495kr; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun Mar-Dec) One of Funen's best, Rudolf Mathis is a waterside restaurant south of Kerteminde harbour specialising in fresh fish and seafood: think lobster au gratin salad, scallops in a pastry basket with spring onions, or fried plaice stuffed with fish mousse.

Getting There & Around

Kerteminde is on Rte 165, 19km northwest of Nyborg and 21km northeast of Odense.

Bus 890 runs frequently from Kerteminde to Odense (38kr, 30 minutes). There's an hourly service to Nyborg (890 and 891; 38kr, 35 minutes).

VIKINGEMUSEET LADBY

Denmark's only Viking Age ship grave, also known as Ladby-skibet, is a captivating site. At the time of writing, it was being beefed up by **Vikingemuseet Ladby** (☎ 65 32 16 67; Vikingevej 123; adult/under 18yr 35kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep, Oct & Mar-May, 11am-3pm Wed-Sun Nov), a new museum that will display finds from the grave, currently held in the National Museum in Copenhagen. It will no doubt provide fascinating background, but the main event will always be the Ladby ship itself, resting in its reconstructed burial mound a short walk from the museum.

Around the year 925, a Viking chieftain was laid to rest in a splendid 21.5m warship, surrounded by weapons, jewellery, clothing, riding equipment, pots and pans, coins and a gaming board. His grave was desecrated shortly after burial, and the wooden planks of the ship decayed long ago. However, the boat's hull was left imprinted in the earth, along with 2000 rivets, an anchor, iron curls from the ship's dragon-headed prow, and the grinning skulls of dogs and horses. As soon as the automatic entrance doors into the burial mound hiss open, most people are awestruck by this compelling relic.

Getting There & Away

Follow Rte 315 out of Kerteminde, towards Ullerslev. In Ladby village, 4km southwest, turn north onto Vikingevej, a one-lane road through fields that ends after 1.2km at the museum car park. The ship mound is a few minutes' walk along a field path.

Local bus 582 (19kr, five daily, Monday to Friday) makes the six-minute trip from Kerteminde to Ladby. Check the schedule with the bus driver, as the last return bus is typically around 4pm. You'll have to walk the Vikingevej section.

HINDSHOLM

The Hindsholm peninsula, stretching north from Kerteminde, is a rural area of small villages. The most fetching is **Viby**, which has a windmill and an early Gothic church with frescoes. Viby is at the southern end of the peninsula, a 15-minute drive from Kerteminde.

Funen's largest single-chamber passage grave, dating from 200 BC, is further north in **Mårhøj**. It consists of a low, 10m-long chamber that visitors can enter – bring a torch and be prepared to crawl. The mound is easy to spot, in a farmer's field about five minutes' walk from the road.

At the northernmost tip is **Fyns Hoved**, an extension of the Hindsholm peninsula connected by a narrow causeway. You can walk to the edge of its 25m-high cliffs for views of the northern Funen coast and, on a clear day, Jutland and Zealand.

Getting There & Away

Route 315 runs the length of the peninsula from south to north; villages and sightseeing spots along the way are signposted.

It's possible to get to Hindsholm from Kerteminde by public transport on weekdays, when bus 481 runs to Dalby, where it changes its number to 483 before continuing until about 1km shy of Fyns Hoved (31kr). There are 11 buses daily between 7am and 5.30pm (fewer in summer when the school bus service ceases).

The best way to visit laid-back Hindsholm is by bicycle. There's a looping cycle route from Kerteminde to Fyns Hoved that makes a good day-long tour. Ask Kerteminde tourist office for details.

EGESKOV SLOT

Whatever you do, don't miss **Egeskov Slot** (☎ 62 27 10 16; www.egeskov.dk; Egeskovgade 18, Kværndrup; adult/4-12yr castle & grounds 165/87kr, grounds only 110/62kr; ☎ 10am-8pm Jul-mid-Aug, to 5pm May, Jun & mid-Aug-Sep), aimed at families but with thrills for all. The castle opens until 11pm on Wednesday nights in July and early August,

with a programme of evening concerts, falconry displays, ghost hunts and fireworks.

Outside the gates is the summer-only **Egeskov Turistbureau** (☎ 62 27 10 46; Egeskovgade 18, Kværndrup; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug, noon-5pm Mon-Fri, noon-3pm Sat Jun, noon-5pm Mon-Fri May & Sep).

Sights

THE CASTLE

Egeskov Slot is a magnificent example of the lavish constructions that sprang up during Denmark's 'Golden Age', complete with moat and drawbridge. It was built in 1554 on a foundation of thousands of upright oak trunks.

Thirteen rooms plus the attic are open to visitors. As well as antique furnishings, grand period paintings, an abundance of hunting trophies (former owner Count Gregers Ahlefeldt-Laurvig-Bille was one of the main African big-game hunters of his day) and an old toy museum, the castle has two unique features.

Once at Legoland, Titania's Palace is now in Rigborg's Room, on the 1st floor of Egeskov Slot. This jaw-dropping doll's house was created by English painter Sir Neville Wilkinson, who filled it with miniature works of art over a 35-year period. You could study its marvels – including the world's smallest (working) organ, tiny glass decanters with removable stoppers, an illustrated Bible no bigger than a thumbnail – for hours.

Another oddity is the Wooden Man statue, which lies in the attic under the main turret. It's said that if he's moved, Egeskov will sink into the moat. To keep him sweet, the castle's owners bring him a bowl of rice pudding at Christmas time.

THE GROUNDS

Designed in the 18th century, the castle's expansive 15-hectare park contains century-old privet hedges, free-roaming peacocks, a herd of deer, space-age sculptures and manicured English-style gardens. Visitor attractions include six museums: of antique cars, antique motorcycles, ambulances and fire engines, agriculture, horse-drawn vehicles and a war-time grocer's shop. There's also the cheesy Dracula's Crypt; a fabulous children's playground; a tree-top walk with shaky bridges and push-button birdsong; a doll's house exhibition; and (our personal favourite) four mazes, three of which are open to the public.

The castle grounds usually stay open an hour longer than the castle.

Sleeping & Eating

Just outside the gates there's a free camping ground for tents only. The plant shop will give you a toilet key for a 20kr deposit.

In the grounds are a couple of kiosks selling hot dogs and ice cream. Cafe Jomfru Rigborg sells more substantial sandwiches, meatballs and pasta dishes.

Getting There & Away

Egeskov Slot is 2km west of Kværndrup on Rte 8, and is well signposted.

If you're in Nyborg or Faaborg, bus 920 (38kr, roughly hourly) runs half a kilometre from the castle – ask the driver where to alight.

From Odense and Svendborg, it's simple between late June and mid-August, when bus 801 goes right to the front gate (weekends only mid-August to September). Otherwise take a train to Kværndrup station and catch the 920 bus mentioned above, or take a taxi.

FAABORG

pop 7234

The engaging little town of Faaborg retains hollyhock-trimmed houses from its 17th-century heyday, when it was home to one of Denmark's largest commercial fleets. Holkegade, Adelgade and Tärngade are particularly pretty streets. If you're passing, it's worth stopping to stroll, enjoy some lunch or visit one of the small museums.

Information

Jyske Bank (☎ 63 61 10 20; Østergade 36) One of several banks with ATMs.

Post office (☎ 63 21 68 68; Banegårdspladsen 4; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat)

Tourist office (☎ 62 61 07 07; www.visitfaaborg.dk; Banegårdspladsen 2A; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Jun-Aug, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Sep-May) With bike hire, cycling maps, fishing licences and phone cards. Also opens from 10am to 3pm Sunday in July.

Sights

DEN GAMLE GAARD

A well-presented museum, **Den Gamle Gaard** (☎ 63 61 20 00; Holkegade 1; adult/under 18yr 30kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm mid-May-mid-Sep, 11am-3pm Sun mid-Sep-mid-Oct & Apr-mid-May) is in a timber-framed house that dates back to about 1725. The

22 rooms, arranged to show how a wealthy merchant lived in the early 19th century, are full of antique furniture, porcelain, toys, maritime objects and even a hearse carriage. One room contains personal items belonging to Riborg Voigt, a merchant's daughter with whom Hans Christian Andersen had a lifelong infatuation. Mementos include one of Andersen's business cards with a lock of his hair sewn onto it.

FAABORG MUSEUM FOR FYN SK MALERKUNST

Whether it's due to the heavy purple and burgundy galleries or the Nordic neoclassical building itself, **Faaborg Museum** (☎ 62 61 06 45; www.faaborgmuseum.dk; Grønnegade 75; adult/under 18yr 50kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Apr-Oct, 11am-3pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) is surprisingly gloomy. However, it does contain a decent collection of Funen art, including works by Johannes Larsen, Peter Hansen, Jens Birkholm and Anna Syberg, and a flower-filled garden and café. Kai Nielsen's original granite sculpture of the *Ymerbrønd* is also here (see Other Attractions, below).

FAABORG ARREST

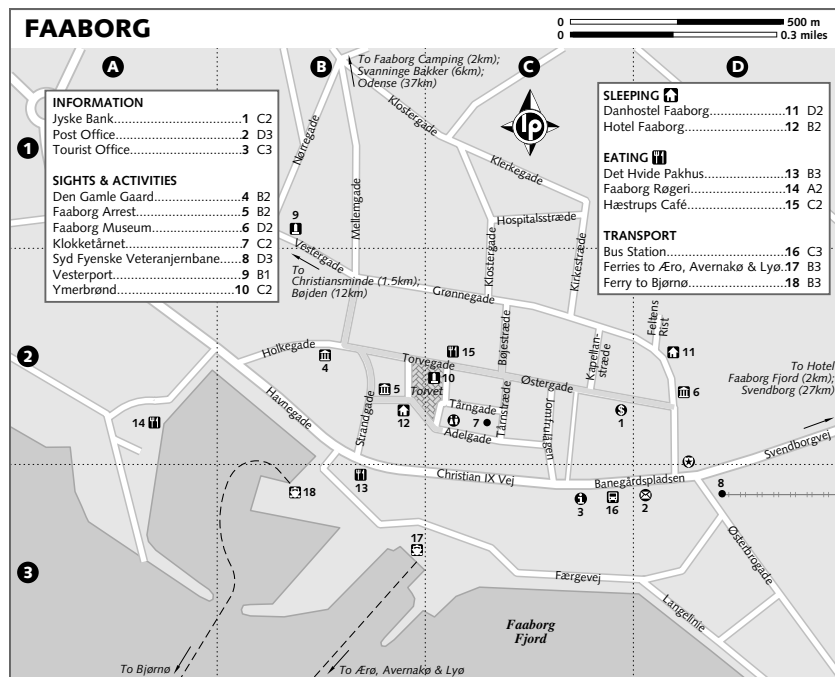
The strange little museum **Faaborg Arrest** (☎ 63 61 20 00; Torvet; adult/under 18yr 30kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm mid-May-mid-Sep, 11am-3pm Sun mid-Sep-mid-Oct & Apr-mid-May) occupies the former prison cells in the town hall. Displays include a rogues' gallery of 19th-century vagabonds, cardsharps and army deserters, a selection of homemade tattooing machines, and interesting interview snippets from former guards and prisoners.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

The main square, **Torvet**, features sculptor Kai Nielsen's striking bronze fountain *Ymerbrønd*, which caused a minor uproar on its unveiling. It depicts a Norse creation myth: the naked frost giant Ymir (from whose body the sky and earth were made) suckling at the udder of a cow.

Nearby, **Klokketårnet** (Bell Tower; Tårnstræde; adult/under 18yr 10kr/free; ☎ 11am-4.15pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-Aug) was once part of a medieval church. It's climbable in summer.

The medieval town gateway **Vesterport** (West Gate) was built in the 15th century to allow entry into Faaborg and is one of only two such gates remaining in Denmark.



LYØ, AVERNAKØ & BJØRNØ

These three small islands offshore from Faaborg make pleasant day trips – bird-spotters in particular will enjoy the rich birdlife. There are primitive camp sites if you're interested in staying overnight, or staff at Faaborg tourist office can arrange stays with local families.

Lyø is the most 'heavily populated' and has the most to see: an old village with an unusual circular churchyard; the Klokkesten, a 1000-year-old dolmen that rings like a bell when struck; and several bathing beaches. You can hire bikes from the grocery store.

For information on getting to the islands, see opposite.

Activities

Intruders and criminals beware: in July and August a costumed night watchman may sing comical nightwatchman songs at you in Danish. His rounds begin at Klokketårnet at 9pm.

Syd Fyenske Veteranjernbane (☎ 62 61 17 09; www.sfvj.dk; adult/4-12yr 50/25kr; 🚂), an antique train, makes summer runs from the old Faaborg

train station north to Korinth. It departs at 1pm and 3.30pm Sunday from late June to August, and at 4pm and 7pm on Thursday from early July to early August. The return trip lasts 80 minutes. One carriage has a lift for people in wheelchairs.

The countryside north of Faaborg, Svanninge Bakker, has been dubbed – a little optimistically – the 'Funen Alps'. It's made up of rolling hills and woodland crossed with cycling and walking trails.

Sleeping

The tourist office books rooms in private homes for around 300/450kr per single/double, plus a 25kr fee.

Faaborg Camping (☎ 62 61 77 94; www.faaborgcamping.dk; Odensevej 140; camping per adult/child 62/35kr; 🏠) The closest camping ground to Faaborg, about 2km north of town, has solar-heated water in the bathroom block, a shop, crazy golf, TV room, wi-fi internet access and bike hire (50kr per day).

Danhostel Faaborg (☎ 62 61 12 03; www.danhostel.dk/faaborg; Grønnegade 71-73; dm/d 150/300kr; 🛏️; Apr-Oct) This is a simple, oh-so-cute 69-bed hostel,

based in two handsome historic buildings – an old cinema and a half-timbered poorhouse, both full of sunshine and creaking woodwork. Dorm beds are available in high summer.

Hotel Faaborg (☎ 62 61 02 45; www.hotelfaaborg.dk; Torvet; s/d incl breakfast 750/850kr; 🍷 🚿) In an old brick building, this small hotel with sweet courtyard garden has 10 double rooms, each with bath and TV. There's a bar and restaurant downstairs.

Hotel Faaborg Fjord (☎ 62 61 10 10; www.hotel-faaborgfjord.dk in Danish; Svendborgvej 175; s/d incl breakfast 995/1195kr; 🍷 🚿 🚿) This large purpose-built hotel on the eastern outskirts of town has restful blue-painted chalet-style rooms, each with private balcony or terrace. Excellent amenities include a restaurant, pool, sauna, *pétanque*, volleyball pitch and wi-fi coverage. The sea is just across the road. Prices drop in summer.

Eating

Faaborg Røgeri (☎ 62 61 42 32; Vestkaj; fish dishes 25-70kr; 🕒 10am-9pm mid-Jun-Aug, 11am-4pm Thu-Sun Apr-mid-Jun & Sep) Nothing says 'Danish holiday' better than eating fishballs and remoulade from a paper plate in the salty-smelling harbourside sunshine.

Hæstrups Café (☎ 63 61 00 20; Torvet 2; light lunches 50-90kr; 🕒 10am-2am Jun-Aug, 10am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 10pm Fri & Sat Sep-May) The town's most popular spot for light meals and drinks, Hæstrups is in the thick of things on the square. The menu is standard Danish café fare – brunch, omelettes, salads, sandwiches, burgers and a few Mexican mains and steaks.

our pick **Det Hvide Pakhus** (☎ 62 61 09 00; www.dethvidepakhuis.dk; Christian IX Vej 2; lunch mains 70-120kr, 1-2-/3-/4-/5-course dinner menus 225/320/375/399/425kr; 🕒 lunch & dinner Jun-Sep) The upmarket White Warehouse by the harbour has fish-focused light lunches, including herrings with onion, pan-fried plaice, and 'shooting star' open sandwiches. In the evening, mains feature perfectly presented meat courses. Phone for opening hours outside the June to September peak.

Getting There & Away

Faaborg is 27km west of Svendborg and 37km south of Odense.

BOAT

Aerofærgerne A/S (☎ 62 52 40 00; www.aeroferry.dk) runs daily ferries to Søby (adult/child four to 11 years/car/bicycle return 149/80/332/34kr, one hour), at the northwestern end of the is-

land of Ærø. There are around five per day on weekdays, and three or four on weekends. Drivers should book ahead.

Ferries also run to the nearby islands of Bjørnø, Lyø and Avernakø. For Avernakø and Lyø, the small car ferry M/F *Faaborg II*, run by **Ø-Færgeren** (☎ 62 61 23 07; www.oe-faergeren.dk; adult/4-15yr return 90/60kr, bicycle 25kr, motorcycle 75kr), operates around five times daily from Faaborg, taking between 30 and 70 minutes. Visitors are discouraged from bringing cars. For Bjørnø, the passenger-only **M/S Lillebjørn** (☎ 20 29 80 50; www.bjoermoe-faergeren.dk; adult/4-16yr return 40/20kr, bicycle 12kr) runs seven times daily Monday to Friday, four on Saturday, three Sunday. The trip takes 20 minutes.

BUS

Faaborg's bus station is on Banegårdspladsen, at the defunct train station on the southern side of town.

From Odense, buses 960, 961 and 962 (59kr, 1¼ hours) run at least hourly to 11pm. From Svendborg, buses 930 and 962 (45kr, 40 minutes) also run at least hourly throughout the day.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Getting to Faaborg by car is straightforward: from the north, simply follow Rte 43. From Svendborg, Rte 44 leads directly west into Faaborg.

Getting Around

Bicycles can be hired at the tourist office for 50kr per day. There are sometimes boats for hire at the harbour for around 600kr per day, plus fuel – enquire at the tourist office.

SVENDBORG

pop 27,199

Hilly Svendborg is the region's largest town, a jolly place to be in summer when its cafés and bars fill up with holidaymaking yachties. Although it's predominantly a modern industrial settlement, it possesses several interesting historic buildings, a great natural history museum and a first-rate hostel. Svendborg is a jumping-off point for the alluring islands beyond – Tåsinge, Langeland and Ærø.

Svendborg had grown into a busy port and shipbuilding centre by the 19th century, producing almost half of Denmark's wooden-hulled ships, and was the site of foundries, tanneries, tobacco processing

plants and mills. Today several shipyards continue to thrive, and more Danish boats are registered here than anywhere else outside Copenhagen.

Information

Nordeabank (☎ 62 21 52 21; Centrumpladsen 8) One of many banks with ATMs.

Post office (☎ 80 20 70 30; Toldbodvej 13A)

Sydfyns Turistbureau (☎ 62 21 09 80; www.visit-sydfyn.dk; Centrumpladsen 4; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 3pm Sat Jul & Aug, 9.30am–5pm Mon–Fri, to 12.30pm Sat Sep–Jun) Covers all of south Funen. Free internet access.

Sights & Activities

Naturama (☎ 62 21 06 50; www.naturama.dk; adult/under 18yr 90kr/free; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun mid-Jan–mid-Dec) natural history museum is in an impressive spiral building with displays of stuffed animals and skeletons on three levels – whale bones dominate the basement, Scandinavian mammals lurk on the middle floor, while birds from the tiny Pallas' leaf warbler to the golden eagle float on a balcony above it all. There's state-of-the-art sound and lighting, and regular film shows and a good hands-on section

where you can stroke a mole, draw a wolf or dress up in skins.

In high summer, the **Maritimt Center Danmark** (☎ 62 80 02 14; info@maritimt-center.dk; Havnepladsen 2; adult/child cruises from 140/100kr; ☎ Thu & Fri Jul & Aug) runs cruises on the historic wooden sailing ship *Meta*, and there's often pirate-related fun for kids – contact the centre for details. Another vintage ship is the *M/S Helge*, which sails in Svendborg Sound – see p220. While you're down at the harbour, look for Sejl-skibsbroen, a jetty lined with splendidly preserved sailing ships opposite where the Ærø ferry docks.

The oldest house in Svendborg, dating from 1560, is **Anne Hvides Gård** (☎ 62 21 34 57; Fruestræde 3; admission free; ☎ 11am–3pm Tue–Sun Jun–Sep), a bumblebee-coloured structure that leans tipsily to one side. Its basic collection of local archaeological finds is labelled in Danish, but pop in if you're passing to see the strangest item: a 14th-century wooden statue of the four-faced god Svantevit.

Forsorgsmuseet Viebæltægård (☎ 62 21 02 61; www.svendborgmuseum.dk in Danish; Grubbemøllevej 13; adult/under 18yr 40kr/free; ☎ 10am–4pm Tue–Sun May–Sep,

1–4pm Tue–Sun Oct–Apr) is Denmark's only poor-house and workhouse museum. It's unusual – we'd certainly never seen a lice box before – and on Wednesday in high summer you can even sample poorhouse food. About a third of the information is in English.

Three small islands, **Drejø**, **Skarø** and **Hjortø**, lie southwest of Svendborg and are pleasant escapes for those who dream of people-lite landscapes surrounded by lapping waves. They mainly attract yachties and ornithologists, drawn by large numbers of breeding seabirds. Camping is allowed at designated sites. Drejø has a restaurant and grocery shop, while Skarø has a small food shop and a snack bar. Car-free Hjortø, with a population of 12, has no facilities – bring a picnic. For information on getting to the islands, see p218.

Sleeping

Svendborg and its surrounds have good B&Bs, many of which are listed in the *Funen and South Jutland B&B brochure* (found in tourist offices across Funen and South Jutland). The tourist office can book rooms for a 25kr fee. The nearest camping ground is on Tåsinge, on the southern side of the Svendborg sound; see p219.

our pick Danhostel Svendborg (☎ 62 21 66 99; www.danhostel-svendborg.dk; Vestergade 45; s/d/tr/q 425/450/465/500kr; ♿) This is an outstanding hostel, although it's not cheap. Spotless two-, three- and four-bed rooms, each with a shower, toilet and satellite TV, are based in a renovated 19th-century iron foundry in the city centre. There are laundry facilities, a large kitchen, several lounge areas, vending machines, trampoline, wi-fi access and a coin-operated computer. The reception opens from at least 8am to 6pm (although it closes on Sunday afternoon), and there's good access for people in wheelchairs.

Hotel Ærø (☎ 62 21 07 60; www.hotel-aeroe.dk in Danish; Brogade 1; s/d incl breakfast 765/925kr; ♿) By the harbour, the Ærø has an annexe of large, modern chalet-style rooms. They're decorated in 'romantic British colonial' style, which translates as big comfy wooden beds, mock mahogany desks and vaguely Chinese-looking lamps. The bar and restaurant (see right) underneath the bedrooms may disturb light sleepers.

Hotel Svendborg (☎ 62 21 17 00; www.hotel-svendborg.dk; Centrumpladsen 1; s/d incl breakfast from 845/1045kr;

♿) Aimed at businesspeople, this modern four-star, four-storey hotel is nevertheless a smart choice for holidaymakers. First-floor accommodation is Scandinavian, with wooden floors and pale furniture. Second-floor rooms are standard chain-hotel blue, but have larger bathrooms. Newly decorated Scala rooms are luxurious, with pop art on the walls, tea-making facilities and flat-screen TVs with internet capabilities. Good access for people in wheelchairs.

Eating

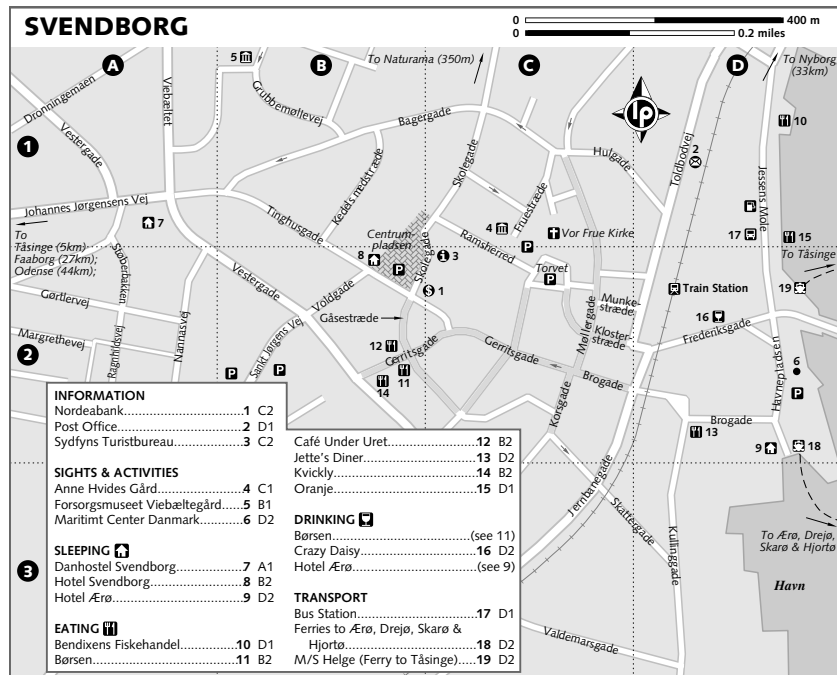
Jette's Diner (☎ 62 22 17 48; Kullingsgade 1; mains 40–68kr; ☎ noon–9.30pm May–Aug, noon–9.30pm Tue–Sun Sep–Apr) A cut above the usual diner, this popular place has a good choice of café food. Alongside salads and sandwiches, there's a Mexican selection and meat and veggie mains of the day. It's favoured by everyone, from workers nipping in for a beer to yachties from the nearby harbour.

Hotel Ærø (☎ 62 21 07 60; Brogade 1; lunch mains 40–100kr, daily specials 95kr, 2-/3-course dinners 248/288kr; ☎ 11am–9.30pm) Opposite the ferry terminal, Ærø has a nautically themed, high-ceilinged dining room. Light lunches are unfussy Danish classics: minced fried beef on rye toast, or fried plaice stuffed with prawns, asparagus and mushrooms in a lobster sauce. Food is prepared to a high standard using fresh ingredients.

Bendixens Fiskehandel (☎ 62 21 18 75; Jessens Mole 2; snacks 50–60kr; ☎ shop 7am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 1pm Sat, grill 11am–8pm) This harbourside fish shop has an attached grill where you can buy fresh fish and seafood dishes – crab salad, smoked salmon, prawns, *fiskefrikadelle* (fried fishballs) – to eat at a table outside.

Café Under Uret (☎ 62 21 83 08; www.under-uret.com; Gerritsgade 50; lunch mains 65–85kr, dinner mains 150–170kr; ☎ 9.30am–10pm Mon–Sat) This bistro's dim, candlelit interior is filled with wheat sheaves, comfy leather banquettes and easy-on-the-ear pop, while outside tables catch the evening sun. Well cooked, healthily huge brunches, sandwiches and burgers feature at lunch, while evening mains include chicken breast, beef and pasta.

Børsen (☎ 62 22 41 41; www.borsenbar.dk; Gerritsgade 31; mains 70–100kr; ☎ kitchen 10am–9pm Mon–Fri, to 3pm Sat) 'Gastro pub' is a revolting term, but Børsen seems happy with it. Luckily it's a great place, with a snug, semisubterranean bar, sunny outdoor seats and big plates of appetising grub –



juicy burgers, burritos, sandwiches and salads. Everything is made from scratch, so service can be slow. This is also one of the town's top nightspots.

our pick Oranje (☎ 62 22 82 92; www.oranjen.dk; Jessens Mole; lunch mains 70-100kr, dinner mains 180-200kr; ☎ 11am-10pm Easter-Sep) Specialties aboard the 100-year-old flower-decked sailing ship *Oranje*, one of Funen's best restaurants, are mainly fish-based, for example fish soup (78kr), although there are a few meat choices such as pork medallions. The food is fresh and the ambience charming. On-board tables are made from old ships' hatches, with plastic ones on land for those without sea legs.

Kvikly (☎ 62 17 66 00; Gerritsgade 33; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) Self-caterers have this central supermarket, with a decent bakery.

Drinking & Entertainment

Hotel Ærø (☎ 62 21 07 60; Brogade 1; ☎ to 11pm) The cosy bar at this hotel has a roaring fire in winter and serves a good range of Danish beer all year.

Crazy Daisy (☎ 62 21 67 60; Frederiksgade 6; admission after midnight 50kr; ☎ nightclub from 11pm Wed, Fri & Sat) Party in the nightclub itself or outside on the chilled-out terrace (June to August only). Friday nights are for over-18s, while on Saturday the age limit is 20.

Børsen (☎ 62 22 41 41; Gerritsgade 31) Also a favourite with bright young things, Børsen opens late on Friday and Saturday night with DJs to provide the music.

Getting There & Away

Svendborg is the transit point between Odense and the southern Funen islands. It's 44km southeast of Odense on Rte 9, 33km southwest of Nyborg on Rte 163 and 27km east of Faaborg on Rte 44.

BOAT

Ferries to Ærøskøbing depart five times a day, the last at 10.30pm in summer. For more information, see p228.

For information on *M/S Helge*, which sails between Svendborg and Tåsinge, see p220.

You can visit the islands of Drejø, Skarø and Hjortø on a day trip via small passenger-only ferries that leave from Svendborg's harbour. Detailed timetables are available at the Svendborg tourist office and at www.visit.svendborg.dk. The **Hjortø ferry** (☎ 40 97 95 18, 62 54 15 18; adult/2-14yr 70/45kr, bicycle 25kr) generally

sails twice daily. The **Drejø & Skarø ferry** (☎ 62 21 02 62; adult/4-12yr return 80/50kr, bicycle 30kr) has three to five sailings daily (sailing time 30 to 75 minutes, depending on route).

BUS & TRAIN

The bus and train stations are a few streets north of the ferry terminal.

There are frequent bus services between Svendborg and Faaborg (930 and 962, 45kr, 40 minutes), Rudkøbing (800, 801 and 910, 38kr, 25 minutes) and other Funen towns.

Trains leave Odense for Svendborg about once an hour (61kr, one hour).

Getting Around

Svendborg Cykeludlejning (☎ 62 20 77 41; www.svendborgcykeludlejning.dk; Jessens Mole 9B; ☎ 9am-1pm Jun-mid-Aug) has 68 bikes for rent (adult/child 70/50kr per day), including tandems (140kr per day). The Svendborg tourist office sells a good little booklet entitled *12 Biking Tours in South Funen & on Tåsinge & Thurø* (15kr), outlining interesting bike rides around the area.

You need a parking disc for most parking in the town centre, which you can buy from the tourist office.

TÅSINGE pop 2279

Tåsinge is the fourth largest island in Funen, accessed by road bridges from Svendborg and Langeland. Its two main sights are both in the northeast: the pretty sea captains' village of Troense and the palatial 17th-century Valdemars Slot. The rest of the island is a mixture of woods, hedges and open fields, cut through by the main road, Rte 9.

Sights

TROENSE

Troense is a well-to-do seaside village with a small yachting harbour and quaint thatched houses: two particularly pretty streets are Grønnegade and Badstuen. A small maritime museum, **Søfartssamlingerne i Troense** (☎ 62 22 52 32; Strandgade 1; adult/under 18yr 25kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep) is housed in the old village schoolhouse. It displays paintings, photos, models, figureheads and items from China brought back by local merchants in the 19th century, mostly labelled in Danish only. Hire bicycles from the museum for 70kr per day.

VALDEMARS SLOT

One of Christian IV's lavish palaces, **Valdemars Slot** (☎ 62 22 61 06; www.valdemarsslot.dk; Slotsalléen 100; adult/4-12yr castle & hunting museum 65/35kr, castle & all museums 100/50kr; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul, to 5pm May, Jun, Aug & Sep) was built for his son Valdemar Christian in 1644. Valdemar never actually lived here – he died on a Polish battlefield at the age of 34 – and the castle itself was badly damaged in the Danish-Swedish wars. It was gifted to the naval hero Niels Juel, who transformed it into the baroque mansion you see today. His descendants still live here, but parts of the building are open to the public. There's no admission charge to the grounds or sandy beach, just outside the southern gate. In May and June, watch out for the thousands of tiny frogs overrunning the estate.

The palatial interior is crammed with antique furniture and eccentricities – lavish Venetian glass, Chinese lamps, 17th-century Gobelin tapestries, a toilet hidden in a window frame, a secret ammo store, Niels Juel's sea chest pasted with engravings, and auto-graphed photos of visiting celebs. In the attic is the grisly Jægt & Trofæmuseum, featuring ethnographical objects and animal trophies collected by hunter Boerge Hinsch and others.

Two other museums edge the large pond-filled courtyard. **Danmarks Legetøjsmuseum** (Denmark's Toy Museum; adult/4-12yr 40/20kr; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul, to 5pm May, Jun, Aug & Sep) is an impressive private collection of vintage playthings, while **Danmarks Museum for Lystsejlad** (Denmark's Yachting Museum; adult/4-12yr 40/20kr; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul, to 5pm Jun & Aug) contains a collection of 30 sleek, varnished sailboats.

Approximately 1km southwest of the castle, look for the 400-year-old oak tree **Ambrosius Egen** along the northern side of the road. It's named after Ambrosius Stub, a romantic poet who worked at Valdemars Slot in about 1700 and who composed many of his verses beneath its shady branches.

You can get to Valdemars Slot by bus, but a better way is via *M/S Helge*, an old-style ferry that carries passengers from Svendborg to Valdemars Slot – see p220.

BREGNINGE

The small village of Bregninge, on Rte 9, is home to Denmark's most visited church, the medieval **Bregninge Kirke**. Its attraction lies in the alluring panoramic views from the **church**

tower (Kirkebakken 2A; adult/child 5/2kr; ☎ 8am-9pm); at 72m it's the highest point on the island.

Tåsinge Skipperhjem og Folkemindesamling (☎ 62 22 71 44; Kirkebakken 1; adult/under 15yr 40kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug), across the road from the church, is a local history museum telling the story of Lieutenant Sixten Sparre and artist Elvira Madigan, Denmark's real-life Romeo and Juliet. Facing separation, the tragic lovers committed suicide in 1889. They are buried together on Tåsinge in the churchyard at Landet, 3km south of Bregninge, where brides still throw bouquets on their grave.

Sleeping & Eating

Bed-and-breakfast accommodation can be found in the booklet *Funen and South Jutland B&B*, or booked through the Svendborg tourist office. Troense has a bakery and minimarket. If you have your own transport, there's a Dagli'Brugsen supermarket at Vindeby, just over the bridge from Svendborg.

Vindebyøre Camping (☎ 62 22 54 25; www.vindebyore.dk; Vindebyørevej 52; camping per adult/child 66/35kr; ☎ Apr-Sep; ☎) This three-star seaside facility is the closest camping ground to Svendborg, located at the northern tip of Tåsinge, about 2km northeast of the Svendborg bridge. It's ideal for families, with two playgrounds, a child-friendly beach and cute-as-anything dwarf goats. More prosaically, there's a laundry, TV lounge, guest kitchen and internet café. The local ferry *M/S Helge* (see p220) docks out front, and you can hire bicycles (55kr per day) and boats (500kr per day).

Hotel Troense (☎ 62 22 54 12; www.hoteltroense.dk; Strandgade 5; s/d incl breakfast 720/910kr; ☎ ☒) Perched above the harbour, Hotel Troense has 30 newly decorated rooms divided between the main building (eight with sea views) and several modern blocks at the back (all twins with private seating areas in the garden). Its restaurant serves classic Danish smørrebrød at lunch (mains 50kr to 160kr) and more adventurous selections for dinner (180kr to 220kr), such as tournedos of red deer with red onion compote. There are several good meat-free options. The restaurant is open from noon to 9pm during the high season, for dinner only the rest of the year.

Valdemars Slot Café & Restaurant (☎ 62 22 59 00; Slotsalléen 100; light lunch mains 50-85kr, dinner mains 140-200kr; ☎ restaurant 11.30am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep) The café at Valdemars Slot is a toast, ice-cream and apple pie servery. However, for a lavish

hang-the-expense meal and atmosphere in spades, the romantic cellar restaurant is the place to go. There are Danish standards such as lunchtime smørrebrød, and French-influenced evening dishes (lobster bisque, foie gras terrine, beef and venison), with a high-quality wine list. The restaurant is open for dinner from 6pm to 10pm, Thursday to Saturday, June to August.

Getting There & Away

Route 9 connects Tåsinge with Svendborg on Funen, and Rudkøbing on Langeland. There are cycle paths running the entire way.

Buses run from Svendborg to Tåsinge, but the vintage ferry **M/S Helge** (Svendborg Tourist Information; ☎ 62 21 09 80; www.mshelge.dk; ☹ mid-May–mid-Sep) is much more fun. The boat leaves Svendborg harbour at 9am, 11am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm and 5.30pm from June to mid-August. It docks at Vindebyøre camping ground on the northern tip of Tåsinge, then at Christiansminde, a beach area east of Svendborg, before continuing to Troense and Valdemars Slot. Departures from Valdemars Slot are at 9.55am, 11.55am, 2.25pm, 4.25pm and 6.25pm. In May and late summer, *Helge* operates the three middle sailings only. Fares range from 20kr to 40kr one way (children aged between four and 11 half price), depending on the distance. Bicycles (20kr) are allowed if there's space.

LANGELAND

Long thin Langeland is a dreamy stretch of green, connected by bridge to Tåsinge. Small farming villages and windmills dot the countryside, and everything moves at an unhurried pace.

Langeland's only large town – Rudkøbing – is worth a couple of hours. Elsewhere on the island are the wonderful Tickon sculpture park and the former military stronghold of Langelandsfort, plus bird-watching sites, scattered artists' studios and 28 small beaches.

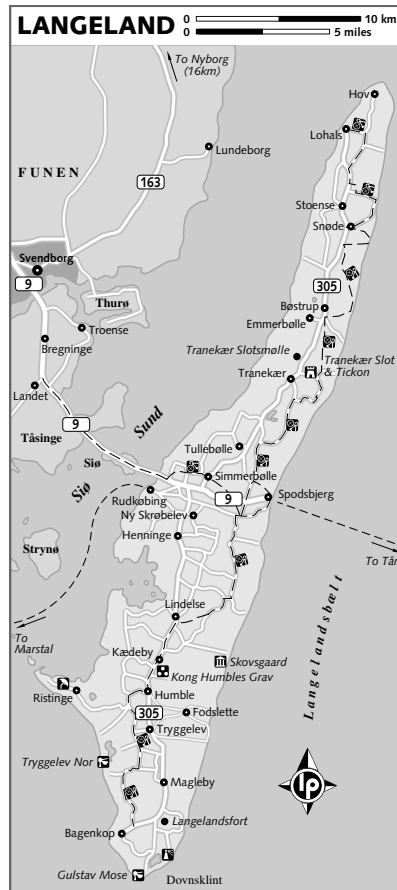
RUDKØBING

pop 4717

Rudkøbing's tumbledown streets, pleasant local museum and several art/antique shops are enough to justify a brief meander. It's also a departure point for ferries to Ærø.

Information

Nordeabank (☎ 62 51 11 04; Østergade 39) One of three banks with ATMs.



Post office (☎ 80 20 70 30; Østerport 2A; ☹ 11am–5pm Mon–Fri)

Tourist office (☎ 62 51 35 05; www.langeland.dk; Torvet 5; ☹ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, to 3pm Sat mid-Jun–Aug, 9.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, to 12.30pm Sat Sep–mid-Jun) With information on the entire island.

Sights

Just east of the harbour is a series of narrow medieval streets lined with tiny tilting houses. Three of the most interesting – Ramsherred, Smedegade and Vinkældergade – can be combined in a 15-minute stroll.

Just near the end of Ramsherred is a statue of HC Ørsted, a local Danish physicist who proved that electricity flowing through wire will produce a magnetic field – and so electro-

magnets were born. Across the street is the old chemist's shop, Ørsted's birthplace.

The most exciting display at **Langelands Museum** (☎ 63 51 10 10; Jens Winthersvej 12; adult/under 18yr 25kr/free; ☹ 10am–4pm Mon–Thu, to 1pm Fri), the region's archaeological museum, is the skeleton of a Viking chieftain, buried with his decapitated slave. There are also finds from Troldebjerg, the only Stone Age village discovered in Scandinavia, including an axe altar, a trepanned skull and a tooth showing signs of flint-drill dentistry: ouch.

Sleeping

Rudkøbing's accommodation choices aren't fantastic. Try the island's private rooms – the tourist office keeps a list – with doubles ranging from 400kr to 600kr.

Danhostel Rudkøbing & Camping (☎ 62 51 18 30; www.rudkoebingcamping.dana4.dk; Engdraget 11; camping per person 55kr, dm/r 140/450kr; ☹ May–Sep) Langeland's only hostel is a 10-minute walk from Torvet, but it's a rather cheerless place, especially if you've come from the splendour of Svendborg. Tents can be plonked in the adjoining field.

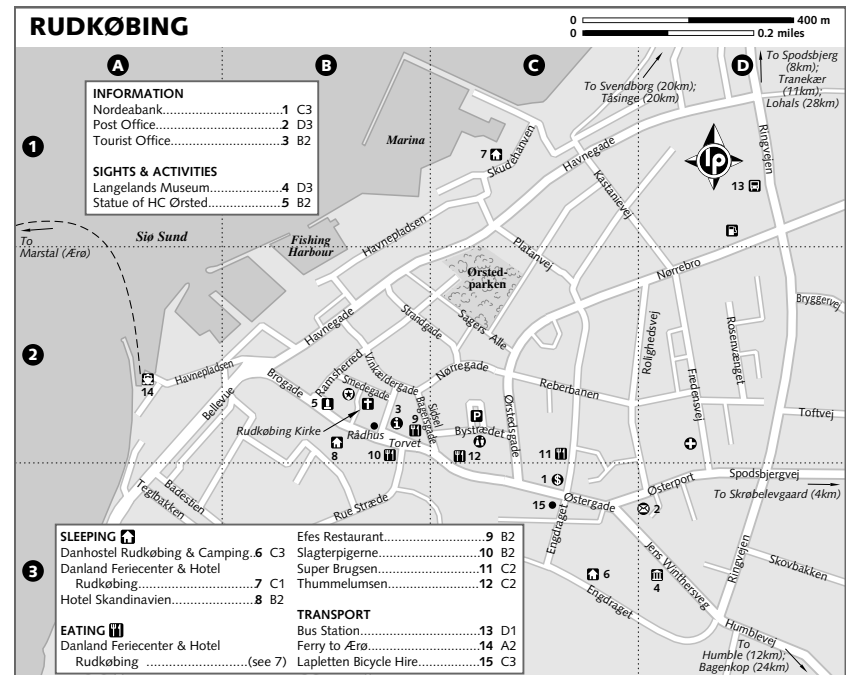
Hotel Skandinavien (☎ 62 51 14 95; www.skanhotel.dk; Brogade 13; s/d 500/650kr, with shared bathroom 400/550kr; (P) ☹) Right in the middle of Rudkøbing, opposite the church, the Skandinavien has basic but amenable rooms with TV – hostel rather than hotel quality. Wi-fi access.

Danland Feriecenter & Hotel Rudkøbing (☎ 62 51 46 00; Havnegade 21; 4-person apt 1435kr; (P) ☹) Down by the modern marina, this holiday centre is part of the Danland empire. Many of the chalet-style apartments (all with bathroom, kitchen, TV and private balcony or terrace) have views over the water, and there's a restaurant, bar and playground. Prices drop significantly out of season.

Eating

Super Brugsen (☎ 62 51 13 54; Ahlfeldtsgade 5; ☹ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 8am–2pm Sat) The central supermarket has a cheapo café, serving meatballs, fried chicken and toasties. It opens earlier than anywhere else in town: join the throng for morning coffee. There's a good bakery inside the shop.

Slakterpigerne (☎ 62 51 10 72; Torvet 6; sandwiches 30kr; ☹ 9am–5pm Mon–Sat, to 1pm Sun) Self-caterers



can buy takeaway smørrebrød at this butcher's shop.

Thummelumsen (☎ 63 51 00 43; Østergade 15; lunch mains 50-70kr, dinner mains 140-160kr) The pick of the high street cafés/restaurants serving homemade light lunches, such as generously filled burgers, chilli, tortillas, and meatballs with rye bread, and more ambitious evening fare, such as carpaccio and gazpacho.

Efes Restaurant (☎ 62 51 22 23; Østergade 5; mains 60-120kr; ☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, dinner Sun) Efes has a scruffy/sticky feel, but the food is reasonably priced and served in big portions. Fans dispel the summer heat and you can watch the world pass by along the main street.

Danland Feriecenter & Hotel Rudkøbing (☎ 62 51 46 00; Havnegade 21; lunch mains 75-120kr, dinner mains 185-215kr) The classiest restaurant in town is attached to the holiday centre/hotel at the marina, with seats looking over the water. Fishy smørrebrød – herring, halibut, smoked salmon and smoked eel – dominate the lunch-time menu. Sophisticated evening dishes include wild boar poached in red wine.

NORTHERN LANGELAND

The main sight in Northern Langeland is Tranekær, a quiet village surrounding a medieval castle with artworks in the grounds. Lohals, at the island's northern tip, has camp sites, hotels and beaches nearby, but it's not as charming as Tranekær and the southern beaches are better.

Tranekær

The little village of Tranekær stretches between its church and the salmon-coloured 12th-century Tranekær Slot, Denmark's oldest inhabited building. The interior isn't open to the public, but the wooded grounds are home to the magical **Tickon** (Tranekær International Centre for Art & Nature; admission by honesty box 25kr), a collection of striking outdoor art installations. For the price of a hot dog, you can wander around the lake and arboretum, inhabited by a flighty herd of red deer. There are surprises round every corner: a unicorn's horn sprouts in a glade, a blue-grey pool becomes a grass-sewn round of granite, a river of tree trunks floods down a hillside. There are 18 sculptures to enjoy, and all the fun of finding them in the 200-acre landscape. (Although one, 'Bone Tapestry', an uphill scramble through head-high brambles, is broken.)

About 1km north is the castle's 19th-century wood-shingled windmill, **Tranekær Slotsmølle** (☎ 63 51 10 10; Lejbøllevvej 3; adult/under 12yr 25kr/free; ☺ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 1-5pm Sun Jun–mid-Sep). Its wooden mechanics are still intact, and there's an exhibition on milling inside (in Danish and German).

SLEEPING & EATING

Tranekær Gæstgivergaard (☎ 62 59 12 04; www.tranekaerkro.dk; Slotsgade 74; s/d incl breakfast 600/750kr; ☑ ☒) This village inn 200m south of the castle dates from 1802 and retains its period ambience. Most rooms have peaceful garden views and there's one lovely, bright family apartment. The highly rated restaurant (mains 200kr to 290kr) is strong on local game such as venison, and offers one vegetarian option.

SOUTHERN LANGELAND

Southern Langeland's pastoral landscape contains some gentle diversions. The island's favourite Blue-Flag beach is at the little thatched seaside village of Ristinge. There are also several passage graves, a historic old manor-house museum and an unusual tourist attraction, Langelandsfort.

At the tip of Langeland, you might spy wild horses: two herds of Exmoor ponies have been introduced to keep the coastal meadows cropped. The area around Bagenkop also contains three excellent bird-watching sites connected by footpaths, and there's a coastal nature reserve, Tryggelev Nor, midway between Bagenkop and Ristinge.

Humble is the largest village in the area, with a bank and petrol station.

Sights & Activities

SKOVSGAARD

If you've been touring Denmark's decadent palaces, it's refreshing to visit **Skovsgaard** (☎ 62 57 24 60; Kågårdsvvej 12; adult/under 18yr 45kr/free; ☺ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sun mid-May-Sep). The kitchen cellars, pumphouse, servants' dining room and housekeeper's room of the old manor house have been furnished with dummies and props, giving an interesting glimpse of how the lower half lived. The stables hold a carriage museum with 25 horse-drawn vehicles. There's also an organic food café – see opposite.

Skovsgaard estate is off the main road, Rte 305, around 3km southeast of Lindelse.

KONG HUMBLES GRAV

Langeland is full of megalithic monuments. The largest is **Kong Humbles Grav**, a few kilometres from Skovsgaard. Dating from approximately 3000 BC, the barrow is edged with 77 stones, extends 55m in length and has a single burial chamber. Legend holds that a king was buried here, although historians give little credence to the tale.

The dolmen is on private property, but visitors can walk there along a path that starts near the whitewashed church in Humble. Head northeast from the car park, which is just past the church, and bear left at the first intersection, following the trail past the farmhouses. The walk takes about 20 minutes each way.

LANGELANDSFORT

There are few better Danish examples of Cold War paranoia than **Langelandsfort** (☎ 62 56 27 00; www.langelandsmuseum.dk; Vognsbjergvej 4B; adult/under 18yr 60kr/free; ☺ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-May-Sep, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sun Apr–mid-May & early Oct), built in 1953 to defend the western Baltic against the Russians. You can descend into various bunkers and command centres, board a claustrophobic U-boat, explore a minesweeper and peer inside two fighter planes (a Russian MiG-23 and an F-35 Draken). The solid grey masses of concrete, rusting barbed wire and camouflage-green emplacements and anti-aircraft guns are in startling contrast to the picnic-perfect countryside in which they are set.

The site is big – to see everything involves a walk of about 2km – and you'll need a couple of hours to look round. Admission stops one hour before closing time. The fort is just north of Bagenkop.

WATER SPORTS

Beginners wanting to learn how to windsurf should contact **Surfcenter Langeland** (☎ 62 57 20 40; kontakt@sc-langeland.dk; Østersøvej 6, Hesselbjerg) based in Hesselbjerg, near Ristinge, which offers four-hour classes for 550kr per person (minimum four people). You can also hire sea kayaks (400kr per day) and the brave can undertake kitesurfing courses. Contact Surfcenter for full details.

Sleeping & Eating

Ristinge Camping & Feriecenter (☎ 62 57 13 29; www.ristinge.dk; Ristingevej 104, Ristinge; camping per person 64kr; ☺ Apr-Aug; ☑ ☒) Within walking distance of

the beach in Ristinge, this super three-star camping ground has a grocery shop, internet café, large swimming pool with waterslide, goats, grass tennis court, a good playground and a snack bar.

Lindelse Kro (☎ 62 57 24 03; www.lindelsekro.dk in Danish; Langegade 21, Lindelse; s/d incl breakfast 595/795kr) Lindelse Kro has 10 rooms, all with private bathroom and parking space outside, and mostly overlooking the garden. They're light and peaceful, if slightly old-fashioned. Attached is one of Langeland's top eating places (open from noon to 9pm), with meals made from fresh seasonal ingredients: light lunches (70kr to 100kr) of smørrebrød, omelette and smoked salmon terrine, and a luxury evening gourmet menu (two/three courses 259/309kr; dinner mains cost 150kr to 200kr).

Humble Kro & Hotel (☎ 62 57 11 34; www.humblekro.dk in Danish; Ristingevej 2, Humble; s/d incl breakfast 595/860kr; ☑) The nearest hotel to Ristinge beach is this one in Humble village. Simply decorated rooms all have private bathrooms; the ones in the new wing are nicest. The restaurant has a lunch menu (mains 40kr to 80kr) of Funen *æggekage* (omelette), smørrebrød and homemade burgers, and evening meals of grilled meat, pasta and fish (80kr to 140kr).

Skovsgaard Café (☎ 62 57 24 60; Kågårdsvvej 12; light lunches 50-90kr; ☺ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sun mid-May-Sep) Run by the same people as Lindelse Kro, this bright, wood-floored, squeaky-clean organic café is at the entrance to the Skovsgaard estate. It has a small menu of fresh-brewed coffee, homemade bread and cakes, salads, burgers and sandwiches. There's also a little garden with tables. Recommended.

Getting There & Away

Route 9 connects Langeland to Tåsinge, via the Langeland bridge.

There's a ferry service from Rudkøbing to Marstal on Ærø (see p228) and from Spodsbjerg to Tårs on Lolland (see p177).

Buses 800, 801 and 910 make the 20km run from Svendborg to Rudkøbing (38kr, 25 minutes) at least hourly.

Getting Around

Route 305 runs from Lohals to Bagenkop, nearly the full length of the island.

BICYCLE

There are asphalt cycle paths running from the Rudkøbing area north to Lohals, east to

Spodsbjerg and south to Bagenkop. The tourist office in Rudkøbing sells a bicycle map of Langeland (30kr), and you can hire bikes from **Lapletten** (☎ 62 51 10 98; www.lapletten.dk; Engdrægt 1), also in Rudkøbing, and from camping grounds elsewhere on the island.

BUS

The buses are all marked 910, so check the destination name for the direction. Buses travel north to Lohals (45kr, 35 minutes) and south to Bagenkop (45kr, 30 minutes) at least once an hour on weekdays, about half as often on weekends. They connect all of Langeland's major villages en route.

Within Rudkøbing there are free green buses that make a 50-minute loop around the city outskirts, going as far east as the Spodsbjerg harbour, about a dozen times a day on weekdays. Priority is given to school children. All buses leave from the Rudkøbing bus station on Ringvejen.

A pass for unlimited one-day bus travel on Langeland and Ærø costs 154/77kr for adults/children – buy one at any bus station or ferry office.

ÆRØ

Ærø is a thoroughly loveable island! With undulating country roads and thatched houses, ancient passage graves and old windmills, it's the sunny Danish island to dream about on dark winter days. The three main towns – Ærøskøbing, Marstal and Søby – are within perfect cycling distance of each other. They drip with maritime history and crooked old houses, and are populated by some of the friendliest people in Denmark.

ENERGETIC ISLANDERS

'Eco-friendly' isn't just a buzzword on Ærø. With a strong record in renewable energy, the island entered a competition 10 years ago to be recognised as Denmark's greenest island. It didn't win, but defeat spurred the ingenious islanders to even greater efforts. They're now on track to becoming entirely energy self-sufficient by 2008.

Three massive 100m-tall modern wind turbines produce 55% of the island's electricity, and are owned by a collective of 500 locals. Look out for the windmills, swishing their elegantly feather-like blades high above Risemark Beach at the southern tip of the island.

Many of Ærø's homes are heated by experimental biomass burning projects, as well as by the world's largest solar power station, based just outside Marstal, and smaller solar plants in Ærøskøbing and Rise. There are guided tours of Marstal power station at 10am on Tuesday and Thursday in June and July.

Tourism is the main industry and Ærø gets busy in summer, especially around the **jazz festival** (www.jazzisland.dk in Danish) in late July/early August. It's a favourite yachting destination, with a total of 800 berths in its modern marinas – that's four times more moorings than hotel rooms. Commercial ferries leave from each of the three towns.

ÆRØSKØBING

pop 1010

A prosperous 17th-century merchants' town, Ærøskøbing has oodles of character. Cobblestone streets wind between crooked houses, each one different, although they're all cheerfully painted and gently skewed, with hand-blown glass windows, doorways full of bright hollyhocks, and half-hidden courtyards offering glimpses into private worlds.

Ærøskøbing has good accommodation options and makes an ideal base for a stay on Ærø.

Information

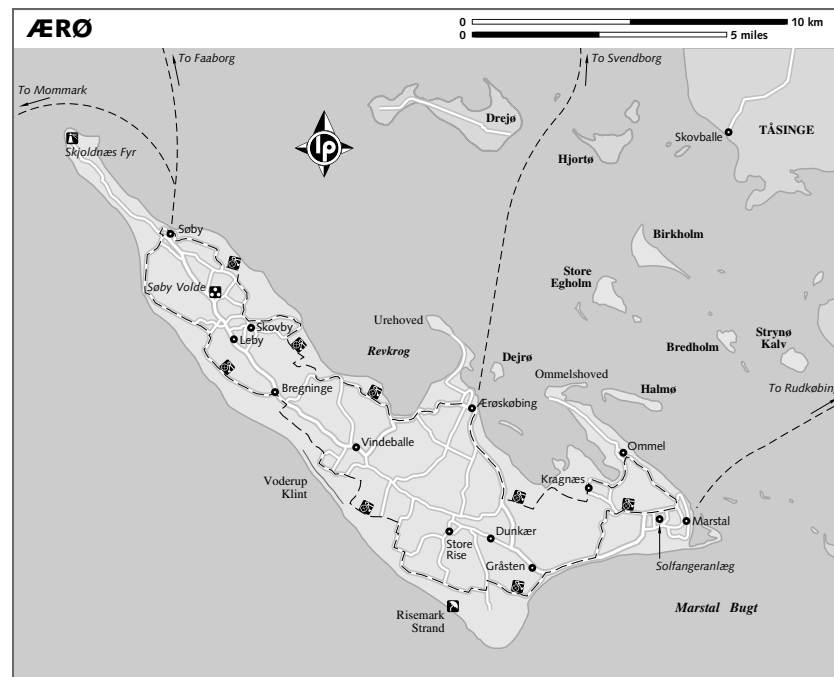
Ærøskøbing tourist office (☎ 62 52 13 00; www.visitaeroe.dk; Havnen 4; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug) Near the ferry terminal.

Danske Bank (☎ 63 52 25 40; Vestergade 56)

Post office (☎ 63 52 20 00; Statene 8; ☎ noon-4.30pm Mon-Fri)

Sights & Activities

The former poorhouse displays **Flaske Peters Samling** (☎ 62 52 29 51; Smedegade 22; adult/under 18yr 25kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-Jun-Jul, 10am-4pm Aug-mid-Oct & Apr-mid-Jun, 1-3pm Tue-Fri, 10am-noon Sat & Sun mid-Oct-Mar), the life's work of ship's cook Peter Jacobsen – 'Bottle Peter' – who crafted 1700 ships-in-a-bottle. The entertainment perhaps lies less in the primitive folk-art ships and more



in the sense of characters you're left with – of leg-pulling Peter and his long-suffering wife!

Our favourite of Ærøskøbing's museums, half-timbered **Hammerichs Hus** (☎ 62 52 29 50; Gyden 22; adult/under 18yr 25kr/free; ☎ noon-4pm Jun-mid-Sep) is the most gnarled, creaky hobbit-hole of a home imaginable. Its snug interior is full of antiques collected by sculptor Gunnar Hammerich: most impressive are the walls, lined with around 3000 beautifully painted 17th- and 18th-century Dutch tiles.

Ærø Museum (☎ 62 52 29 50; Brogade 3-5; adult/child 25/10kr; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat & Sun mid-Mar-mid-Oct, 10am-1pm Mon-Fri mid-Oct-mid-Mar) contains 19th-century items of passing interest.

Wandering the timeless streets is like winding the clock back a century or two. The oldest house, at Søndergade 36, dates back to 1645. Other fine streets for strolling are Vestergade and Smedegade; there's a particularly charming house known as Dukkehuset (Doll's House) at Smedegade 37.

Sleeping

The tourist office has a list of B&Bs around the island costing about 300/450kr for sin-

gles/doubles. Staff can book holiday cottages, averaging 4200kr per week in the high season.

Ærøskøbing Camping (☎ 62 52 18 54; www.aerocamp.dk; Sygehusvej 40B; camping per person 65kr; ☎ May-Sep) Near a shallow beach just 1km from the town centre, this camping ground has a three-star rating, which means a playground, TV room with wood-burning stove, laundry, shop and pet rabbits. Bicycles are available.

Danhostel Ærøskøbing (☎ 62 52 10 44; www.danhostel.dk/aeroeskoebing; Smedevejen 15; dm/s/d 150/300/350kr; ☎ Apr-Sep; P ☒) Just 1km out of town on the road to Marstal, Danhostel Ærøskøbing is beautifully situated, with a beach at the end of the garden. It's typically clean and modern, but slamming doors can irritate at night. Dorm beds available in high season. It's possible to rent bikes here.

Graasten Farm (☎ 62 52 24 25; www.greyfarm.dk; Østermarksvej 20; d incl breakfast 480kr, camping per person 20kr; P) For a genuine country experience, try this working cattle farm run by a Danish-English couple, midway between Ærøskøbing and Marstal. It has three guest bedrooms and lots of common space. Fresh eggs, milk and other

local produce feature at breakfast. There's a primitive camping ground for walkers and cyclists, and the beach is a 10-minute walk away.

Hotel Ærøhus (☎ 62 52 10 03; www.aerohus.dk; Vestergade 38; s/d from 890/1190kr, with shared bathroom 500/700kr; (P) (Q)) Close to the harbour, with comfortable, modernised double rooms in the beamed main building and a smart modern extension and garden annexe out the back. Facilities include a restaurant, and two tennis courts a five-minute walk from the hotel. Bicycles hire is 75kr per day.

our pick Pension Vestergade 44 (☎ 62 52 22 98; www.pension-vestergade44.dk; Vestergade 44; r with shared bathroom incl breakfast 930kr; (P) (X) (Q)) Built by a sea captain in the 18th century, this period house is furnished with antiques, and yet there's not a trace of stuffiness. The romantic interior blends style with cosiness, there's a beautiful garden and the breakfast is tasty, with freshly laid eggs and homemade jam. Book ahead, as there are only six rooms (shared showers). Wi-fi access.

Eating

Ærøskøbing Røgeri (☎ 62 52 40 07; Havnen 15; light mains 30-65kr; ☎ 10am-8pm Jul & Aug, 11am-7pm Jun, 11am-5pm Apr, May & Sep) Ærøskøbing's smoke-house, adjacent to the harbour, serves cheap smoked fish and shrimp dishes to eat in the garden or take away.

Café Aroma (☎ 62 52 40 02; Havnepladsen; light mains 30-90kr, dinner mains 130-160kr; ☎ 11am-8pm mid-May-Sep) The café opposite the tourist of-

fice offers inexpensive sandwiches, salads and burgers (including a vegetarian version). The tiny interior is decorated with film posters, a battered sofa, a barber's chair and old cinema seats. There's more space outside on the terrace.

Hotel Ærøhus (☎ 62 52 10 03; Vestergade 38; lunch mains 100-130kr, 3-course dinner menu 375kr) Inside the old-fashioned dining room a full menu of Danish fish and meat dishes is served alongside a reasonable wine list. Sample dishes include smoked venison haunch with scrambled egg, steak with softly fried onions and pickle, and vegetable tart.

Self-caterers have the fabulicious **Ærøskøbing Bageri** (☎ 62 52 10 31; Vestergade 62; sandwiches 30kr) for sandwiches, newly baked cakes and bottles of locally brewed beer. There's a **Netto** (Vestre Allé 4; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) supermarket by the harbour.

MARSTAL

pop 2272

Marstal, at the eastern end of the island, grew up with an eye on the horizon and the salt wind in its hair. In its 19th-century heyday, more than 300 merchant ships pulled into port annually. It's still a seafaring town with a busy shipyard, marina and excellent nautical museum. There's a reasonably good beach, half sandy and half rocky, 800m south of town.

The sea was such an integral part of people's lives that even the gravestones at the seamen's church on Kirkestræde are engraved with maritime epitaphs, the most frequently quoted being: 'Here lies Christen Hansen at anchor with his wife; he will not weigh until summoned by God'.

Information

Danske Bank (☎ 45 12 02 50; Prinsensgade 8) Located one block inland from the tourist office.

Marstal tourist office (☎ 62 52 13 00; www.visitaeroe.dk; Havnegade 5; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug) A few minutes' walk south of the harbour.

Post office (☎ 62 53 10 77; Kongensgade 31A; ☎ 12.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat)

Sights

If you don't know a barquentine from a brig, the absorbing nautical collection at **Marstal Søfartsmuseum** (☎ 62 53 23 31; www.marmus.dk in Danish; Prinsensgade 1; adult/under 18yr 45kr/free; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, 9am-5pm Jun, 10am-4pm May, Sep & Oct,

10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat Nov-Apr) will make everything clear. It's stuffed full of ships' models, sea chests and sailors' souvenirs from around the world, a full-size boat with seasickness-inducing moving background, and even some climbable rigging in the courtyard.

Sleeping

Marstal Camping (☎ 63 52 63 69; www.marstalcamping.dk; Egehovedvej 1; camping per person 65kr; ☎ Apr-late Oct) Another seaside camping ground, Marstal Camping is behind the marina, 1km south of the harbour. There's a shop, TV room and laundry.

Danhostel Marstal (☎ 62 53 39 50; www.marstalvandrerhjem.dk; Færgestræde 29; dm 150kr, s/d 500/550kr, with shared bathroom 300/350kr; ☎ mid-Apr-mid-Sep) Marstal has an adequate central 82-bed hostel, only 500m south of the ferry harbour and within walking distance of restaurants and the beach. A couple of rooms have sea views. Dorm rooms available in high season.

Hotel Marstal (☎ 62 53 13 52; www.hotelmartal.dk in Danish; Dronningestræde 1A; s/d incl breakfast from 725/875kr, with shared bathroom 450/600kr) Near the harbour, this family-run place has inexpensive basic rooms in the old building. There are also 12 bright, modern, appealing ones with kitchenettes and private bathrooms in the new annexe. For an extra payment, you can have sea views.

Eating

At the ferry harbour there's a small food shop and a grill restaurant serving burgers, pizzas and other simple eats.

Kongensgade 34 (☎ 62 53 37 34; Kongensgade 34; lunch mains 40-120kr, dinner mains 70-130kr; ☎ 10am-11pm Jun-Sep, to 6pm Tue-Sun Oct-Dec & Feb-May) This café-delicatessen, near Marstal church, has a sharp modern look; jolly tablecloths, stripy wooden chairs and lime-green candles. It serves burgers, nachos and charcuterie platters at lunchtime, and a small menu of traditional Danish meals, made from local produce, in the evening. Have a game of table football to work up an appetite.

Den Gamle Vingård (☎ 62 53 13 25; Skolegade 15; pastas & pizzas 70-80kr, fish & meat mains 80-120kr) The intimate interior of this pub-like restaurant is decorated with nautical oil paintings and lit by old fishermen's lanterns. Food is unfussy but well prepared and comes from an 'international kitchen' – ie one that makes pasta, pizza

and plenty of commendable freshly cooked fish dishes.

There's a large bakery, **GuldBageren** (☎ 62 53 16 25; Prinsensgade 11; ☎ 6.15am-5.30pm Mon-Sat), near the museum, and a **Super Brugsen** (☎ 62 53 17 80; cnr Kirkestræde & Skovgyden; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, to 4pm Sat) supermarket, about 300m west of the ferry harbour.

SØBY

pop 577

The shipyard, fishing fleet and marina dominate the village of Søby. It has a few pretty thatched houses, but doesn't pack the same charm as Ærøskøbing. The **tourist office** (☎ 62 52 13 00; www.visitaeroe.dk; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Thu, to 1pm Fri Jun-Aug) is at the harbour.

Sights & Activities

Best on a blustery day, **Skjoldnæs Fyr** (adult/4-12yr 5/2.50kr; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri) is a 19th-century, granite-block lighthouse 5km from Søby, next to the golf course. You can climb the narrow stairway for exhilarating views of wind-tossed swallows and the sea. A few minutes' walk beyond the lighthouse is a pebble beach and bird breeding area.

The earthen ramparts of Søby Volde, once part of a 12th-century fortress, hunch to one side of the main cross-island road, 3km south of Søby. Just across the lane is 16th-century **Søbygård** (☎ 62 58 16 76; Søbygaardsvvej; adult/child 25/5kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10.30am-4pm Apr & May, 11.30am-4pm Sep-mid-Oct), a compact manor house with a dry moat, haunted by a white lady. It stages frequent art exhibitions, and classical concerts in August.

Sleeping & Eating

Søby Camping (☎ 62 58 14 70; www.soby-camping.dk; Vitsø 10; camping per person 55kr) A friendly seaside two-star facility 1km west of town. Sites are protected by large hedges, and there's a kiosk selling the basics and a playground with 'moon bounce'. It's open year-round, but it's a good idea to phone first between October and May.

our pick Skinner's B&B (☎ 63 52 70 11; Godthåb 13, Leby; teamskinners@gmail.com; s/d 250/400kr) Skinner's B&B sums up the Danish concept of *hygge* (cosiness) to the max. Four rooms – Charming Chicks, Ramblin' Roses, Coffee & Cream, and Sea & Sand – are all cosily decorated by the crafty owner. Breakfast, with homemade jam and freshly laid eggs, is downstairs in the old stable. It's like coming home.

SLY SECRET OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE DOGS

All over Ærø's seaside towns, you'll notice an inordinate number of Staffordshire china spaniels, sitting in pairs in the windows of the higgledy-piggledy cottages. These were brought from England by Danish sailors, usually as presents for wives and sweethearts.

But the innocent-looking hounds hold a sneaky secret. If the dogs were turned to look out to sea, the woman's lover was free to pay a call. If they faced inwards towards the hearth, the woman's husband was home from the sea, and the lover had to warm his feet elsewhere!

Finn's Bageri (☎ 62 58 10 65; Nørrebro 2; pizzas 50-60kr; 🕒 6.30am-9pm Jul & Aug, to 6pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun) Søby's busy bakery, 200m south of the harbour, is a one-stop cake-and-gossip shop. There are indoor and outdoor tables where you can eat your sandwiches, and 20 pizza varieties to eat in or take away.

Søby Kro (☎ 62 58 10 06; Østerbro 2; mains 150kr; 🕒 café mid-May-mid-Sep) Good fresh-fish dinners are served at the café of this small inn, three blocks south of the harbour. Its specialities are fish soup and plates of local mussels. Rooms at the inn, which is open year-round, cost 500kr (including breakfast, shared bathroom).

There are a couple of fast-food kiosks near the harbour and a **Dagli'Brugsen** (☎ 62 58 12 64; Langebro 13; 🕒 8am-6pm) supermarket near the *kro* (inn).

Getting There & Away

Ærøfærgerne A/S (☎ 62 52 40 00; www.aeroe-ferry.dk) runs year-round car ferries to Søby from Faaborg, to Ærøskøbing from Svendborg and to Marstal from Rudkøbing. All run about five times a day and take about an hour. A single ticket costs 92/52kr per adult/child (four to 11), 23kr per bike and 201kr per car. If you have a car it's a good idea to reserve, particularly on weekends and in summer.

The **Søby-Mommark ferry** (☎ 62 58 17 17; www.soby-mommark-ruten.dk) runs between Søby and Mommark a few times daily from April to September, but much less frequently during the rest of the year. The trip takes 1¼ hours and costs 100kr for adults, 55kr for children, 25kr per bicycle and 204kr per car (560kr for a car and up to five passengers).

Getting Around

BICYCLE

Cycle Routes

Cycling is the perfect way to enjoy Ærø, with three well-signposted cycle routes. Route 91 begins at Marstal and continues up to Søby. Route 90 runs along the north of the island from Søby to Ærøskøbing. Route 92 runs from Ærøskøbing back to Marstal. The entire route is about 60km. Ærø's tourist offices sell an inexpensive English-language cycling map of the island, listing sights along the way.

Rental

You can rent bikes for 45kr to 50kr per day across Ærø: in Ærøskøbing, at the hostel, camping ground, Hotel Ærøhus and at **Pilebækkens Cykelservice** (☎ 62 52 11 10; Pilebækken 11; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat, plus 10am-1pm Sun Jul); in Marstal, at **Nørremarks Cykelforretning** (☎ 62 53 14 77; Møllevejen 77; 🕒 10-11am Jul & Aug) in the harbour car park; and in Søby, at **Søby Cykelforretning** (☎ 62 58 18 42; Langebro 4A; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, plus 10am-12.30pm Sat early Jun-Aug & 10am-12.30pm Sun Jul).

BUS

Fyns Amt (☎ 63 53 10 10) operates bus service 990 from Marstal to Søby via Store Rise and Ærøskøbing. It runs hourly from 5.27am to 8.29pm on weekdays. Weekend buses are about half as frequent, with the first bus leaving Marstal at 8.24am. It takes about 50 minutes to get from one end of the island to the other. Fares range from 24kr to 38kr, depending on the distance. A pass for unlimited one-day bus travel on Ærø and Langeland costs 154/77kr for adults/children, available from bus stations or ferry offices.