

Southern Jutland



There's a surprising grab bag of goodies for travellers in Southern Jutland. It's a low-key region of salty little offshore islands, understated royal palaces and character-filled historic towns, with unexpectedly modern treats in the form of edgy art and architecture and offbeat design museums. The region looks for inspiration from a few different sources – from the sea, naturally, but also beyond that. Southern Jutland is the only part of Denmark connected to mainland Europe (the current border dates only from 1920), and in places such as Tønder and Sønderborg you can feel the historic ties with Germany – and the present-day ones, too, particularly in camping grounds on Rømø or Als come high summer. Esbjerg has a touch of the 'wild frontier' about it – a new city (by Danish standards) that has grown big and affluent off the back of oil, fishing and trading. Its focus is to the west, to the oilfields of the North Sea, and its links to the UK mean it could well be your first introduction to Denmark.

But the jewel in Southern Jutland's crown, and an absolute must-see, is picturesque little Ribe, the country's oldest town. This is historic Denmark at its most photogenic, and once you get over the armies of tourists wielding ice-cream cones, you can't help but fall in love with the skewwhiff charm of the half-timbered houses, the sweetly meandering river and the imposing presence of the cathedral.

The islands of Als, Fanø and Rømø have clear-cut appeal for beach-going holidaymakers, but bird-watchers also love this region. The tidal rhythms of the west-coast Wadden Sea and surrounding marshland bring an abundance of feathered friends (and their fanciers) to the region. An eclectic mix of royal-watchers, castle-collectors and even chair-enthusiasts may also be ticking must-sees off their list.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Joining the night watchman on a memorable evening walk through beautiful **Ribe** (p243)
- Indulging princess fantasies in fairy-tale **Møgeltønder** (p249)
- Heading from modern, industrial Esbjerg to salty-dog **Fanø** (p236) in only 12 minutes
- Envyng **Kolding** (p230) its very cool mix of the old and the new
- Checking out the blokarts (go-karts with sails) at Sønderstrand on **Rømø** (p245)
- Wrapping your head around the mind-bending exhibits and experiments of **Danfoss Universe** (p252)



KOLDING

pop 55,000

Kolding is a vibrant, picturesque and eminently likeable mid-sized town with a crowd-pleasing mix of old and new, wonderfully summed up in one of its major drawcards, the hill-top castle of Koldinghus. After a stroll through the charming old quarters at the town's heart, you can head to Trapholt to admire the modern furniture design that Denmark is renowned for. It's a winning combination.

Information

Danske Bank (Jernbanegade 3)

Library (☎ 79 79 11 00; Slotssøvejen 4) Seriously sleek new library with free internet.

Post office (Banegårdspladsen 8) Next to the train station.

Surfers Paradise (☎ 75 50 18 19; 2nd fl, Jernbanegade 11; per hr 36kr; ☎; noon-3am) Internet café.

Tourist office (☎ 76 33 21 00; www.visitkolding.dk; Akseltorv 8; ☎; 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat) Knowledgeable staff help with town info and sell the Kulturkort Kolding (100kr), which offers free entry to Koldinghus and Trapholt.

Sights

Koldinghus (☎ 76 33 81 00; www.koldinghus.dk; Adelgade 1; adult/child 65kr/free; ☎; 10am-5pm) is the town's extravagant showpiece, with the requisite turbulent history. A fortress occupied the land in 1268, while parts of the castle you see before you today can be traced to the mid-15th century. The year of its most recent mishap was 1808 – at that time the castle was hosting Spanish soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars. Missing the Mediterranean summer, the soldiers lit a fire to restore some inner heat. This heat soon turned into an inferno, sending the castle up in a blaze of glory that left nothing but soot-covered walls. The tower then spectacularly caught fire and collapsed through the Great Hall and onto the castle chapel. At the time, the Danish state was at war and bankrupt, and the common school of thought was that the castle would be left in ruins. If only they could see it now, shining like never before and supported internally by strikingly modern timber-and-steel structures. The interplay between old and new architectural styles is indeed a highlight, although there are good displays, too, including collections of historic paintings and silver-

ware, and changing contemporary exhibits. Be sure to grab a floor plan to help find your way around. It's quite a climb to the top of the tower but you'll be rewarded with a panoramic view of the town. From June to October the castle hosts classical music concerts – ask at the tourist office about dates.

The **Trapholt** (☎ 76 30 05 30; www.trapholt.dk; Æblehaven 23; adult/child 65kr/free; ☎; 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Wed; ☎) museum of modern art, applied art and furniture design is housed in an architectural wonder in a residential area on the outskirts of town. There's a couple of classics from the Skagen artists, vibrant modern pieces and a sculpture garden. Downstairs, the furniture collection has examples of covetable Danish chairs, with many fine examples by the likes of Hans Wegner, Arne Jacobsen and Verner Panton (check out Jacobsen's wonderful Ant and Egg chairs). One of the newer and more intriguing exhibits at Trapholt is Arne Jacobsen's prototype summerhouse, Kubeflex (the only one of its kind). It was designed by Jacobsen between 1969 and 1970 and involves cubic modules that were designed to be added to as the need arose. The house has been rebuilt in the garden and is open to the public on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All in all, this is one of the most impressive museums in Jutland (and the café and gift shop are also top-notch). Take bus 4 to get here.

The tourist office marks the town centre and the curvy streets sprawl out from here. The red-and-green half-timbered house close to the tourist office on Akseltorv is **Borchs Gård**, a decorative Renaissance building dating from 1595. The shopping strip of **Helligkorsgade**, just south of Akseltorv, is good for a stroll – cameras at the ready for Kolding's oldest house at number 18. It's an orange-coloured half-timbered affair built in 1589 with lots of wonky character, and the pocket of houses and small garden directly behind number 18 are fairy-tale stuff.

Sleeping

Danhostel Kolding (☎ 75 50 91 40; www.danhostel.dk/kolding; Ørnsborgvej 10; dm 140kr, d 300-420kr; ☎; Feb-Nov) A top option above a park about 1.5km north of the city centre (a 10-minute walk), with pleasant rooms in the older-style main building, and a new annex boasting private bathrooms and modern kitchen-dining area. Popular with families and backpackers; bus 3 stops nearby.

MODERN-ART MUSEUMS

Like your art modern and surrounded by cool, cutting-edge architecture? As well as Kolding's superb Trapholt (p231), don't miss AROs Aarhus Kunstmuseum (p259), Nordjyllands Kunstmuseum in Aalborg (p297), Silkeborg Kunstmuseum (p276) or Esbjerg Kunstmuseum (opposite). And yes, take care when saying the word 'kunstmuseum'! If design-driven chairs are your thing, don't miss Trapholt or the water tower at Tønder Museum (p248).

Kolding Byferie (☎ 75 54 18 00; www.kolding-byferie.dk; Kedelsmedgangen 2; d/f apt from 750/950kr; ☎) Built 14 years ago but looking much newer, this central lakeside complex does family holidays in style. On offer are stylishly furnished apartments of various sizes (sleeping up to six) in funky-shaped buildings – triangular, circular, octagonal and star-shaped (great when admired from the Koldinghus tower). Linen and breakfast cost extra.

our pick Hotel Koldingfjord (☎ 75 51 00 00; www.koldingfjord.dk; Fjordvej 154; s/d from 1225/1525kr; ☎) Play lord of the manor at this grand, castle-like estate 7km east of the city, amid forest on Kolding Fjord (2km past Trapholt; take bus 4). It's a gorgeously restful spot – especially the library downstairs from reception, which opens onto a large outdoor terrace. The rooms are an ode to Scandi minimalism and design, with chairs direct from Trapholt and Bang & Olufsen TVs. It has free bike rental and wi-fi, plus a lovely restaurant. A winner.

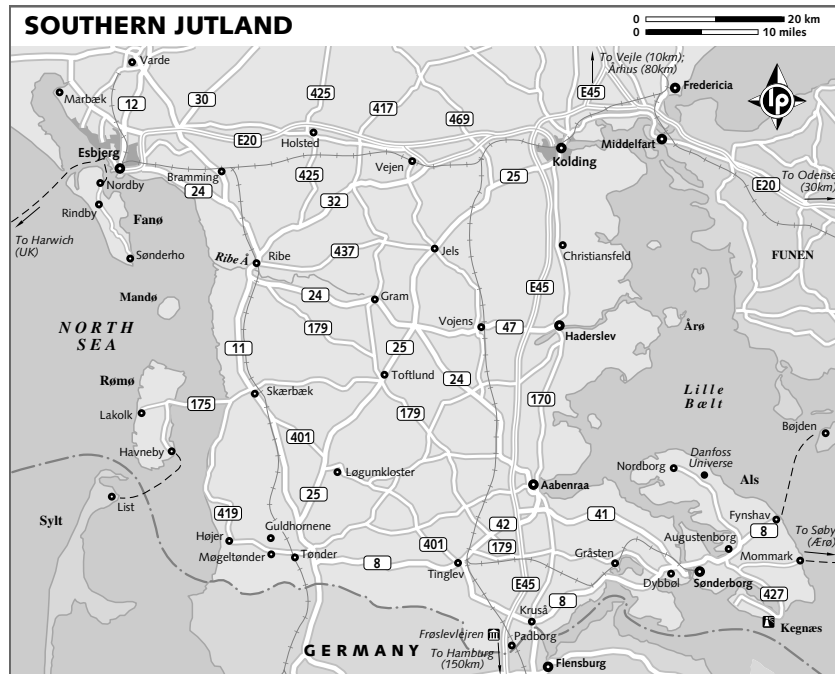
Also recommended are two contrasting in-town options, by the train station:

Saxildhus Hotel (☎ 75 52 12 00; www.saxildhus.dk; Banegårdspladsen; s/d from 695/845kr) Classic period hotel with old-world charm and various categories of room.

First Hotel Kolding (☎ 76 34 54 00; www.firsthotels.dk/kolding in Danish; Banegårdspladsen 7; s/d weekends from 795/995kr, weekdays 1095/1295kr) New and style-driven, from the funky light fittings and pink ottomans in the lobby to the monochrome rooms and stylish ground-floor café.

Eating & Drinking

Lucca (☎ 76 33 39 00; Låsbybanke 4; lunch 50-105kr, dinner mains 100-190kr; ☎; from 11am; ☎) A smooth performer that effortlessly morphs from daytime café to night-time restaurant, then on to bar (with DJs spinning funky tunes after 10pm



Friday and Saturday). Lunch is popular for the weekday 'build-your-own-sandwich' buffet (68kr).

Den Blå Café (☎ 75 50 65 12; Slotsgade 4; lunch 58-108kr, dinner mains 78-148kr; ☒ lunch & dinner; ☑) A casual all-day spot with a large alfresco area that fills with locals come lunchtime. The daily brunch offerings are mighty fine and there's a menu of easy-pleasing favourites (burgers, pasta, salads, nachos). If the weather doesn't favour the great outdoors, get cosy in the cute French-bistro interior. Good for a late-night drink, too.

Nicolai Biograf & Café (☎ 75 50 03 02; Skolegade 2, entry on Blæsbjerggade; dinner mains 75-145kr; ☒ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; ☑) Inside a slickly renovated old school, Nicolai has an art-

house cinema alongside a cool café that offers a thoughtful menu of fresh, simple meals (burgers, risotto, baked salmon). It's a good spot for late-afternoon drinks, and the weekend brunch buffet is a hit with in-the-know locals.

You'll Never Walk Alone Pub-Restaurant (☎ 75 50 80 44; Al Passagen 2; ☒ from noon) Quell any pangs of homesickness at this more-English-than-England pub (known in town simply as 'the English pub') in a passage between Jernbanegade and Klostergade. Outdoor seating, meals, pub quizzes (in English), live music and football matches on the big screen give this place an appeal beyond simply its 318 (!) beers on the menu (including plenty of Danish microbrews).

Self-caterers should head to centrally located **Netto** (Jernbanegade 48; ☒ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) supermarket, close to the train station, or check out the small **market** (☒ morning Tue & Fri) in front of the town hall on Akseltorv, selling fruit, veg and cheese.

Getting There & Away

Kolding is 72km east of Esbjerg and 82km north of the German border. The E20 (which continues east to Funen) and the E45 connect Kolding with other major towns in Jutland. If you're travelling by road north to south, Rte 170 is a pleasant alternative to the E45.

There are regular train services from Kolding south to Padborg on the German border (97kr, 1¼ hours) and north all the way to Frederikshavn (279kr, 4¼ hours), via Århus (135kr, 1½ hours) – both destinations involve a change of trains in Fredericia. There's a second line west to Esbjerg (78kr, 55 minutes) or east to Odense (97kr, 40 minutes).

Getting Around

A ring road encircles the heart of town, with Ndr Ringvej and Slotssøvejen marking the northern and northwestern boundaries. There's free parking off Slotssøvejen, opposite the library.

Buses leave from next to the train station. The tourist office has bike rental for 60/300kr per day/week.

ESBJERG

pop 71,900

First impressions do count, and if your first taste of Esbjerg (pronounced *es-be-erg*) is the odour of fish or the sight of industrial plants, well, we wouldn't really blame you for giving it only a cursory glance en route to more glamorous Jutland destinations. True, with its grid layout and modern feel, Esbjerg lacks the cobblestone charm of Denmark's tourist meccas. But never judge a book by its cover. Esbjerg has some hidden gems, not least good bars, impressive art, and a superb offshore island, Fanø, an easy 12-minute ferry-ride away and offering picture-book charm in spades.

Esbjerg is both Denmark's youngest city and largest port, and it's the hub of the country's North Sea oil activities. Historically, Esbjerg owes its existence to the German invasion of Schleswig and Holstein in 1864, which forced Danish farmers to find another harbour from which to export goods to Britain. Thus, in

1868, the city of Esbjerg was created in what was then a desolate and far-flung corner of the country. In a relatively short time it has developed into a key industrial centre, growing into the nation's fifth-largest city.

Orientation

Torvet, the city square, can be found where Skolegade and Torvegade intersect. The train and bus stations are about 300m east of Torvet, while the ferry terminal is 1km southwest.

Information

Danske Bank (Torvet 18)

Krone Apotek (☎ 75 12 92 11; Kongensgade 36; ☒ 24hr) A 24-hour pharmacy.

Nordea (Kongensgade 48) Bank & ATM.

Post office (Torvet 20)

Tourist office (☎ 75 12 55 99; www.visitesbjerg.dk; Skolegade 33; ☒ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2.30pm Sat mid-Jun-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Sep-mid-Jun) On the corner of Torvet, the main square. Offers tourist information, maps and internet access.

Sights

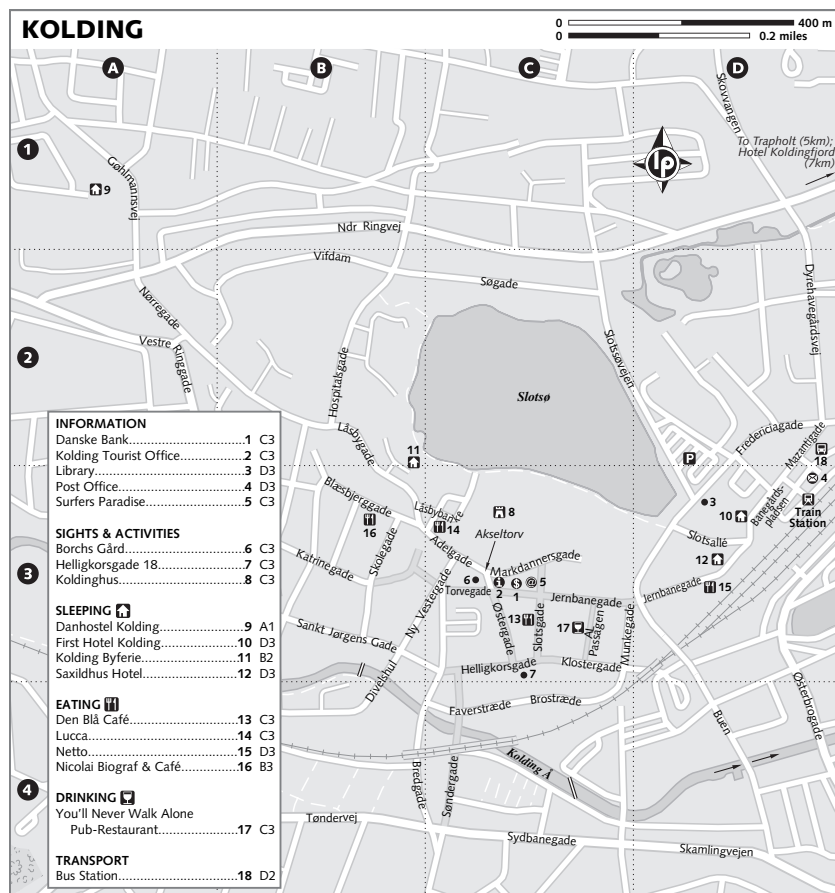
MUSIKHUSET & KUNSTMUSEUM

Famed Danish architect Jørn Utzon (he of the Sydney Opera House) designed **Musikhuset Esbjerg** (Esbjerg Music House; ☎ 76 10 90 10; www.mhe.dk in Danish; Havnegade 18) together with his son, Jan. The performing arts centre opened in 1997 and is the city's main venue for music concerts, classical and otherwise.

It's also home to the small but eye-opening modern art collection of **Esbjerg Kunstmuseum** (Esbjerg Art Museum; ☎ 75 13 02 11; www.eskm.dk; Havnegade 20; adult/child 40kr/free; ☒ 10am-4pm), which has notable works by Richard Mortensen, Robert Jacobsen and Per Kirkeby – also look out for work from Svend Wiig Hansen (he of *Mennesket ved Havet*, p234). In quite a magnificent display of openness (and a nod to restricted space), the Åbne Magasiner (Open Stores) downstairs allows you to look up and admire undisplayed works from the museum's collection. The other benefit to a visit is that from the museum it's easy to admire the angles and details (especially the mushroomlike columns) of the Utzons' architectural prowess.

ESBJERG VANDTÅRN

Esbjerg self-consciously attempted to manufacture a medieval appearance in 1897 when town architect CH Clausen built **Esbjerg**



Vandtårn (Esbjerg Water Tower; ☎ 75 12 78 11; Havnegade 22; adult/child 15kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm daily Jun–mid-Sep, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Apr–May & mid-Sep–Oct, closed Nov–Mar), now conveniently (for tourists) located next door to Musikhuset Esbjerg. You can climb up the impressive-looking tower and get your bearings while checking out the sweeping harbour and the new-looking ‘old’ town.

FISKERI- OG SØFARTSMUSEET

Although it’s outshone somewhat by the huge aquarium at Hirtshals (p309), for an up-close-and-personal look at North Sea marine life you can head 4km northwest of the city centre to the saltwater aquarium at **Fiskeri- og Søfartsmuseet** (Fisheries & Maritime Museum; ☎ 76 12 20 00; www.fimus.dk; Tarpbagevej 2; adult/child 85kr/free; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul-Aug, 10am-5pm Sep-Jun). Here you can see assorted local fish species getting along swimmingly, plus entertaining seals being fed at 11am and 2.30pm daily. The aquarium can be reached on buses 1 and 8.

MENNESKET VED HAVET

On the waterfront opposite the Fiskeri- og Søfartsmuseet is Esbjerg’s most interesting land-

mark, *Mennesket ved Havet* (Man Meets the Sea), commemorating four stark-white, 9m-high, stylised human figures, sitting rigid and staring out to sea. They were created by Danish sculptor Svend Wiig Hansen to commemorate the city’s centennial in 1995 and they make a striking backdrop to holiday snaps.

Activities

On rainy days it’s worth knowing that Denmark’s largest indoor swimming complex is in Esbjerg. **Svømmestadion Danmark** (☎ 75 45 94 99; www.svdk.dk; Gammel Vardevej 60; adult/child 50/25kr; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat & Sun) is home to a wave pool, waterslides, kiddie pools, sauna and spa.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, from December to February a free outdoor **ice-skating** rink is set up on Torvet, with skates available for hire.

There are two summertime harbour cruise options. In July and August **Scandlines** (☎ 33 15 15 15; adult/child/family 80/40/200kr) offers a 1 ¼-hour sightseeing cruise around the harbour and into Ho bay, with a chance of seeing seals in their natural habitat. Tours operate from

Monday to Thursday and depart from the ferry harbour in Esbjerg two or three times a day, and from Nordby on Fanø once daily. Enquire at the tourist office for the schedule.

Nord-Line (☎ 20 23 11 88; www.nordline.dk in Danish; adult/child/family 150/75/400kr) offers a longer (2½ hours) cruise with a nature focus (as opposed to Scandlines’ sightseeing aim). There is a nature guide on board, and you stand a better chance of seeing seals. Tours operate on weekdays from Esbjerg (from Museum Pier 1) and Fanø’s Nordby from late May to late October.

Sleeping

Staff at the tourist office can book private rooms and apartments (from 200kr per person per night) and holiday houses in Esbjerg and surrounds.

Adalens Camping (☎ 75 15 88 22; www.adal.dk; Gudenåvej 20; per adult/child/site 59/31/30kr; ☎ ☎) This is kiddie-camping heaven, especially in peak season, with great facilities including a budgie-filled aviary, pet rabbits and sheep, playground, pool and mini-golf. Cabins (from 600kr) are also available at this large ground, about 7km northwest of the city centre – the turn-off is 3km past *Mennesket ved Havet*. Bus 1 stops 400m from the check-in area.

Danhostel Esbjerg (☎ 75 12 42 58; www.esbjerg-danhostel.dk; Gammel Vardevej 80; dm/s/d 150/320/400kr; ☎ reception 8am-noon & 4-7pm; ☎ ☎) A top option if you don’t mind being out of the city centre. It’s in a pretty spiffy location – close to a sports stadium, a park and next to Svømmestadion Danmark. The building is lovely and the communal facilities typically top-notch. All rooms have shared bathroom facilities. The hostel is 3km northwest of the city centre on bus 4.

Cab Inn Esbjerg (☎ 75 18 16 00; www.cabinn.com; Skolegade 14; s/d/tr from 525/645/765kr; ☎ ☎) The best value in town is found here in this classy century-old building that’s been thoroughly renovated and sits in a prime inner-city location. It’s a hit with international and local visitors, who enjoy its good rates and light-filled rooms (with a bit more character than those of Cab Inn Århus), all with bathroom, kettle, phone and TV. Free parking, a decent breakfast buffet (50kr) and free wi-fi add up to a good deal.

Hotel Ansgar (☎ 75 12 82 44; www.hotelansgar.dk; Skolegade 36; s 675-775kr, d 930-1035kr) The dim hallways might give you pause, but the rooms

here are bright and comfy and the welcome is warm. The interior has been updated at various stages, so cheaper rooms have older (but still pleasant) décor, and newer rooms are quite sleek, with flat-screen TVs and colourful artwork. Summer and weekend prices are cheaper than midweek.

Hotel Britannia (☎ 75 13 01 11; www.britannia.dk; Torvet 24; s/d from 999/1099kr; ☎ ☎) The town’s largest and most business-oriented hotel has good service and agreeable on-site eateries in a central location, but we don’t think the simple rooms justify the price. Plans for expansion and overdue redecorating should remedy this, but don’t pay full price if you can help it – staff told us the best room prices (down to as low as 500kr) could be found online on last-minute booking sites.

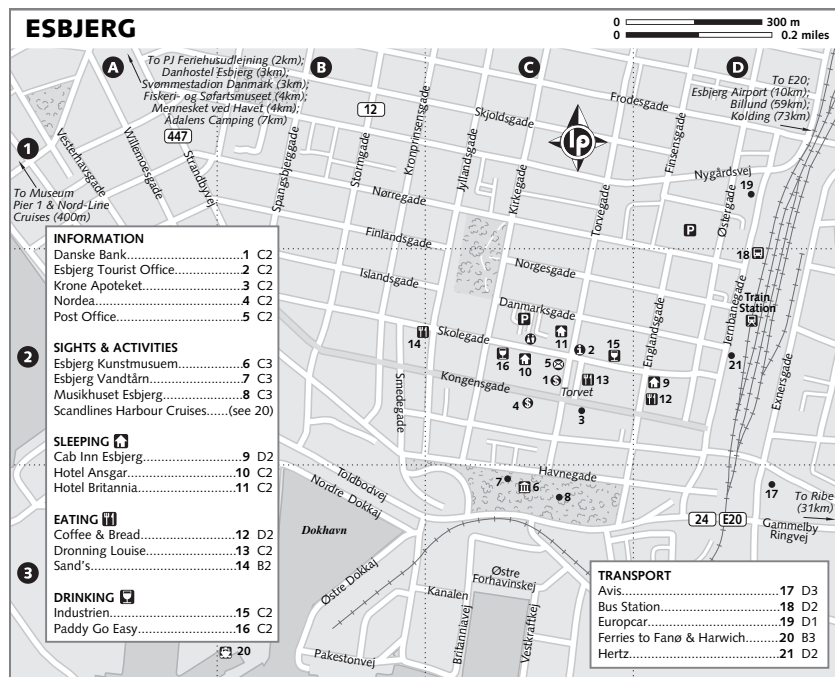
Eating & Drinking

Coffee & Bread (☎ 75 12 02 38; Englandsgade 23; sandwiches & bagels 30-40kr; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat; ☎) Another from the school of obvious business names. The modern, richly coloured décor complements the strong coffee, perky smoothies and filling sandwiches served here with aplomb. A good pit stop.

Sand’s (☎ 75 12 02 07; Skolegade 60; lunch 35-89kr, dinner mains 89-179kr; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) If you’re in Denmark on a short break and want to sample traditional cuisine, make a beeline for this classy 100-year-old restaurant and order up big! The menu is an ode to old-school Danish favourites: lunchtime smørrebrød and herring platters, evening fish (try the *bakskuld*, a fish not unlike a flounder) and plenty of *bof* (beef).

Our pick Dronning Louise (☎ 75 13 13 44; Torvet 19; meals 69-195kr; ☎ lunch & dinner; ☎) The Queen Louise commands a great position on Torvet and entertains her loyal subjects with something-for-everyone panache: she’s a café, restaurant, pub and even a nightclub (until the wee hours on Friday and Saturday). There’s also live music each Thursday. You can dine from the wonderfully broad all-day menu on the square, inside or in the rear courtyard. The brunch plate (95kr) offers serious bang for your buck, or try local boutique brews at the pub. You may not need to venture elsewhere.

Skolegade is where to head to when you’re thirsty; it has plenty of bars to choose from. Cool **Industrien** (☎ 75 13 61 66; Skolegade 27; ☎) from noon; ☎) is a local favourite for its changing art



exhibitions, live music, late, late hours (until 6am Thursday to Saturday) and thumpin' burgers; but we also like **Paddy Go Easy** (☎ 75 18 07 72; Skolegade 42; ☎ from 2pm) for the real Irish accents behind (and often in front of) the bar, Kilkenny and Guinness on tap, and decent *cratic* all round.

Getting There & Away

Esbjerg airport (EBJ; ☎ 76 12 14 00; www.esbjerg-lufthavn.dk) is 10km east of the city centre. Low-cost airline **Ryanair** (www.ryanair.com) provides regular connections between London (Stansted) and Esbjerg, while **bmi** (www.flybmi.com) connects the city daily with another North Sea oil base, Aberdeen.

For details of ferry services to the UK, see the Transport chapter (p331). For information on boats leaving for Fanø, see p238.

Esbjerg is 77km north of Tønder, 31km northwest of Ribe, 59km southwest of Billund and 92km west of the Funen–Jutland bridge. If you're driving into Esbjerg, the E20 (the main expressway from the east) leads directly into the heart of the city and down to the ferry harbour. If you're coming from the south, Rte 24 merges with the E20 on the outskirts of the city. From the north, Rte 12 makes a beeline for the city, ending at the harbour.

All the major car rental agencies are in town, close to the train station: **Avis** (☎ 75 13 44 77; Exnersgade 19), **Europcar** (☎ 75 12 38 93; Jernbanegade 56-58) and **Hertz** (☎ 75 15 45 00; Jernbanegade 35). They all also have booths at the airport, although advance reservations are required.

The train and bus stations (local and long-distance) are along Jernbanegade. There are lockers at the train station. Trains run hourly between Copenhagen and Esbjerg (287kr, 3½ hours) during the day. There's also a train service that runs north to Struer (164kr, 2½ hours); south to Ribe (65kr, 35 minutes) and Tønder (88kr, 1½ hours); and east to Kolding (78kr, one hour) and Århus (change at Skjern or Fredericia; 210kr, 2½ to three hours).

For onward travel to countries further north, **Thinggaard Express** (☎ 98 11 66 00; www.ekspresbus.dk in Danish) operates bus 980 to Frederikshavn twice daily (adult one way 290kr), calling at Viborg and Aalborg en route.

Getting Around

Town bus 8 runs about once an hour between the airport and the bus station (26kr), as do

long-distance buses 44 and 48. Bus 5 runs to the harbour (18kr) every 20 minutes.

Bikes can be hired from the office of **PJ Feriehusudlejning** (☎ 75 45 62 33; Hjertingvej 21), about 2km from the city centre en route to *Mennesket ved Havet*. The tourist office has English-language brochures detailing suggested cycling tours.

Most city buses can be boarded at the train station (18kr for a one-way ride, or 100kr for a 10-ride *klippekort*).

There's free central parking with a two-hour limit west of Hotel Britannia (enter from Danmarksgade), and free parking with no time limit at the car park on Nørregade east of the library.

Taxis wait at the train station or can be called on ☎ 75 14 45 00.

FANØ

pop 3200

We think the intimate island of Fanø holds more charm than the larger, more-popular island of Rømø, further south. It may have something to do with the means of arrival (is it just us, or does a boat offer far more romance than a 10km-long causeway?). And this island backs it up with two traditional seafaring settlements full of pretty thatched-roofed houses, blooming gardens and cobblestone streets lined with boutiques and cafés. Beach-goers are blessed with wide, welcoming strips of sand on the exposed west coast. All this, and it's just 12 minutes from Esbjerg – too easy.

Ferries from Esbjerg arrive at Nordby; the main villages of Nordby and Sønderho lie at each end of the 13km-long island. The best beaches are around Rindby Strand and Fanø Bad on the west coast. Further north is the vast sand spit that marks the northernmost tip, Søren Jessens Sand.

The **tourist office** (☎ 75 16 26 00; www.fanoturist.dk; Færgevej 1; ☎ 8.30am-5pm daily Jul-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Sep-Jun) is close to the ferry dock in Nordby. The main street, Hovedgården, begins just behind it – along here you'll find banks, stores and eateries.

The tourist office has an excellent brochure and map outlining on-foot exploration of the two main villages, pointing out the most historic buildings. The towns are home to a few low-key museums detailing Fanø's rich maritime history – Fanø's golden age peaked in the late 19th century, when it boasted the

largest fleet outside Copenhagen. Nordby has a maritime and costume museum, and a history museum. Sønderho has an art museum and an original 17th-century sea captain's house. These are certainly interesting, but only if you have loads of time up your sleeve. If you're here on a day trip, you're better off wandering around Nordby to soak up the charm, then hiring a bike, visiting the beach, taking a boat trip (see p234) or seeing where the mood takes you – to the local links golf course (the oldest golf course in Denmark) or the small local brewery, perhaps.

The west coast is nicely geared to family holidaymakers, with the bulk of the island's camping grounds. Wildlife-watchers and nature-lovers will feel at home in the centre of the island where 1162 hectares make up a nature reserve, Fanø Klitplantage. Take to the walking tracks and you'll find birds, deer and rabbits in abundance. Stop by the picnic site and forest playground at Pælebjerg.

Sleeping & Eating

For information on booking summer holiday flats and houses (which typically sleep four to six people and are rented by the week), contact the tourist office.

Feldberg Strand Camping (☎ 75 16 24 90; www.feldbergcamping.dk; Kirkevejen 39 Rindby Strand; camp sites per adult/child 67/35kr) There are eight camping grounds on Fanø, all family-focused and most with cabins for rent. This busy, well-positioned ground is a stone's throw from the beach (right by a supermarket and pizzeria) and gets very busy during the summer months.

our pick Møllesti B&B (☎ 75 16 29 49; www.mollesti.dk; Møllesti 3, Nordby; s 300kr, d 400-450kr; ☎ Jun-Aug or by arrangement) This delightful B&B is hidden away in the atmospheric lanes of Nordby. It's home to four simple, stylish bedrooms sharing two bathrooms and a lovely kitchenette/lounge in a restored sea-captain's house from 1892, and prices are excellent. It can also open for guests on weekends outside of summer, but you'll need to arrange this in advance.

Fanø Krogaard (☎ 75 16 20 52; www.fanokrogaard.dk in Danish; Langelinie 11, Nordby; d 695-1095kr) In operation since 1664, this charming old inn on the waterfront in Nordby has cosy antique-filled rooms and an intimate atmosphere, plus a fabulous large terrace and long menu of local specialities, especially fishy favourites (lunch costs 68kr to 98kr; dinner mains cost 168kr to 198kr).

JUTLAND FOR KIDS

Jutland is serious family-holiday territory, especially in high season when the family-filled camper vans hit the road. Theme parks, amusement parks, zoos and child-friendly beaches are just part of the story – businesses generally go out of their way to woo families, and children are rarely made to feel unwelcome anywhere. We encountered few restaurants without a *bornemenu* (children's menu), and in the summer peak (when business travel dwindles), even business hotels may pop a set of bunk beds into their rooms to cater for families.

One kid-friendly chain of restaurants for families to look out for is Bone's (www.bones.dk), which has about 10 branches in major cities throughout Jutland and an American-influenced menu of spare ribs and barbecued chicken (plus 'early birdy' discounts if your table is free by 7pm). The website is in Danish, but clicking on 'Find lokal restaurant' will – surprise – bring up a list of addresses.

Travellers with kids looking to be entertained should enquire at local tourist offices – all medium-sized towns have somewhere where kids are king, from swim centres to bowling alleys, play centres and petting farms. Museums have kids' activity programmes (especially in summer), camping grounds have playgrounds and high-summer activities and entertainment, and on it goes.

There are plenty of big-ticket attractions too. Here are some you could consider adding to your itinerary:

- Legoland (p281)
- Danfoss Universe (p252)
- Nordsømusset (p309)
- Skandinavisk Dyrepark (p274)
- Givskud Zoo & Lion Park (p280)

Bakeries and cafés abound in Nordby, Fanø Bad and Sønderho. Take a stroll along Nordby's Hovedgården especially and you'll be tripping over appealing little eateries and sunny courtyard gardens.

Getting There & Around

It's expensive to take a car across to Fanø. If you're doing a day trip or overnight stay from Esbjerg, you're better off leaving your car on the mainland and hiring a bike or taking the bus once you reach the island.

Scandinlines (☎ 33 15 15 15; www.scandinlines.dk; return adult/child 35/20kr) shuttles a car ferry between Esbjerg and Nordby, in Fanø's northeast, two or three times hourly from 5am to midnight. Sailing time is 12 minutes. It costs low/high season 250/350kr to transport a car (including passengers), but only 35kr to transport a bike or motorbike.

There's a local bus service (route 631) from the ferry dock that runs about once an hour in summer, connecting Nordby with Fanø Bad (18kr), Rindby Strand (18kr) and Sønderho (26kr). The schedule is heavily reduced in winter.

Bicycles can be hired from a number of places, including **Fanø Cykler** (☎ 75 16 25 13; Hovedgården 96; per day 50kr) in Nordby. Taxis can be reached on ☎ 75 16 62 00.

RIBE

pop 8000

The crooked cobblestone streets of Ribe (pronounced *ree-buh*) date from 869, making it Denmark's oldest town. It's easily one of the country's loveliest spots in which to stop and soak up some history. It's a delightfully compact chocolate-box confection of crooked, half-timbered 16th-century houses, clear-flowing streams and lush water meadows. Such is the sense of living history that the entire 'old town' has been designated a preservation zone, with more than 100 buildings registered by the National Trust. Don't miss it.

History

Founded around 700, Ribe evolved into a key post of the hailed Viking era. It began when the Apostle of the North, Ansgar, was given a parcel of land by the Danish king around 860 and permission to erect a church. It's not known when the church was built, but the earliest record of the existence of a bishop

in Ribe is 948 – and bishops have cathedrals. During the Viking era, Ribe, linked to the sea by its river, flourished as a centre of trade between the Frankish empire and the Scandinavian states to the north.

In the 12th century the Valdemar dynasty fortified the town, building a castle and establishing Ribe as one of the king's Jutland residences.

The end of the medieval period saw Ribe enter its most torrid time. Two factors combined to send the town into 250 years of decline. A fire ripped through in 1580, and the relocation of the royal family to Copenhagen saw royal money leave the town. In turn the population diminished, and the bustling trade port turned into a struggling town with little regional importance or influence.

This economic downturn was something of a blessing – there was no finance available for building bigger and better houses, so the old town remained virtually untouched. In 1899 a tourist and conservation organisation (showing remarkable foresight) was established, and in 1963 the town council issued a preservation order covering the core of the old town. Their good sense has been well rewarded, with tourists flocking to soak up Ribe's old-world charm.

Orientation

Ribe is a tightly clustered town, so it's easy to explore. Everything, including the hostel and the train station, is within a 10-minute walk of Torvet, the central square that's dominated by the huge cathedral.

It's well worth exploring the very pretty area behind the art museum, where paths pass over the river and lead either to St Catharine's Church or Nederdammen.

Information

Danske Bank (Saltgade 10-14)

Library (☎ 75 42 17 00; Giørtz Plads) Close to the art museum, and has free internet access.

Post office (Sankt Nicolajgade 12) Next to the art museum.

Tourist office (☎ 75 42 15 00; www.visitribe.dk; Torvet 3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Jul-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Jun & Sep, 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Oct-May) Has an abundance of information on the town and surrounding areas, plus internet access. It offers the Ribe Pas (adult/child 20/10kr) that grants the holder up to 20% discount at many museums and deals at local restaurants.

Sights

RIBE DOMKIRKE

Dominating Ribe's skyline is the impressive and historic **Ribe Cathedral** (☎ 75 42 06 19; Torvet; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Jul-mid-Aug, 10am-5pm May-Jun & mid-Aug-Sep, 11am-4pm Apr & Oct, 11am-3pm Nov-Mar; from noon Sun year-round; ☎), which dates back to 948 – making it the oldest in Denmark. The cathedral was largely rebuilt in 1150 when Ribe was at the heart of royal and government money, which in turn paved the way for some fine architectural structures.

The new cathedral was constructed primarily from tufa, a soft porous rock quarried near Cologne and shipped north along the Rhine. It took a century for the work to reach completion. Later additions included several Gothic features, but the core of the cathedral is decidedly Romanesque, a fine example of medieval Rhineland influences in architecture. One notable exterior feature is the original 'Cat's Head' door at the south portal of the transept, which boasts detailed relief-work including a triangular pediment portraying Valdemar II and Queen Dagmar positioned at the feet of Jesus and Mary. At noon and 3pm the cathedral bell plays the notes to a folk song about Dagmar's death during childbirth.

The interior décor is a real hotchpotch of later influences. There's an organ with a façade designed by renowned 17th-century sculptor Jens Olufsen, a baptismal font from 1375, and an ornate pulpit created in 1597 by Odense sculptor Jens Asmussen. A mark on

the pillar behind the pulpit shows where the flood of 1634 reached. You can find remains of paintings from the 16th century on the last two pillars on the northern side of the cathedral, while in the apse are modern-day frescoes, stained-glass windows and seven mosaics created in the 1980s by artist Carl-Henning Pedersen. The funky mosaics enliven the church and add a fascinating contrast to the more sombre features.

For a towering view over the countryside, climb the 248 steps (52m) up the **cathedral tower** (adult/child 10/5kr), which dates back to 1333. A survey of the surrounding marshland makes it easy to understand why the tower once doubled as a lookout station for floods.

In July and August you can join worthwhile guided tours of the cathedral (30kr); English-language tours are at 11am Monday and Thursday. Look out for summer classical-music concerts held here, too.

SANKT CATHARINÆ KIRKE

Founded by Spanish Black Friars in 1228, **St Catharine's Church** (☎ 75 42 05 34; Sankt Catharinæ Plads; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm May-Sep, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Oct-Apr) was originally built on reclaimed marshland, but it eventually collapsed. The present structure dates from the 15th century. Of the 13 churches built during the pre-Reformation period in Ribe, Sankt Catharinæ Kirke and Ribe Domkirke are the only survivors.

In 1536 the Reformation forced the friars to abandon Sankt Catharinæ Kirke and, in the years that followed, the compound served as an

THE AMERICAN DREAM

Jacob A Riis, a local Ribe resident, was 21 when he lost his heart to the town's prettiest girl. Unfortunately, the girl was not as taken by young Jacob, so in 1870 he packed up his kit and headed west to the city of dreams, New York. Still heartbroken, he lived on the streets for seven years. This drew his attention to the inhumane slums that so many beaten New Yorkers called home. Combining his two potent passions, journalism and photography, he portrayed the poor through a series of graphic, moving slides that jolted a nation into action. His most acclaimed work was his first book printed in 1890, *How the Other Half Lives*, which depicted through vivid photographs and profound words the hopeless situation many immigrants faced in New York City during the late 19th century. Through such words, Riis, and close associate Theodore Roosevelt (then commissioner of police, later the USA's 26th president) helped clear the slums.

Riis was offered the post as mayor of New York but turned it down to pursue matters closer to the heart. Having directly helped well over a million people off the streets, he returned to Ribe to woo and marry the love of his life – completing the fairy tale in true Danish style. After his death in 1914 he was known as 'New York's most beneficial citizen'. You can walk past his former residence in Ribe on the corner of Skolegade and Grydtergade, and admire a statue of him in Badstuegade, by the river.

asylum for the mentally ill and a wartime field hospital, to name a few incarnations. These days the abbey provides housing for the elderly.

In the 1920s Sankt Catharinæ Kirke was restored at tremendous cost (due to its still-faulty foundations) and was reconsecrated in 1934. In 2007 the church was again closed for extensive repairs. The interior boasts a delicately carved pulpit dating to 1591 and an ornate altarpiece created in 1650.

For a 5kr fee you can enter the tranquil cloister garden and enjoy a few minutes of contemplative silence.

DEN GAMLE RÅDHUS

First-time visitors may be bemused to see passers-by stare inquisitively at the roof

of the **old town hall** (☎ 76 88 11 22; Von Støckens Plads; adult/child 15kr/free; ♿ 1-3pm Mon-Fri May & Sep, 1-3pm daily Jun-Aug). Put simply, they're bird-watching, and have been caught up in the 'stork culture' this town cherishes (see the boxed text, opposite). This is the oldest rådhus (1496) in Denmark and was used as a courthouse until 2006 – these days it's a popular spot for civil weddings. As well as ceremonial artefacts, there's a collection of medieval weapons and the executioner's axe.

RIBE KUNSTMUSEUM

An undeniable benefit of being the oldest town in the land is the opportunity to amass an impressive art collection. **Ribe Kunstmuseum** (☎ 75 42 03 62; www.ribe-kunstmuseum.dk; Sankt Nico-

STORK STALKING

In Denmark, Ribe is known as 'Storkebyen', the Stork Town, thanks to the graceful storks that build their nests every year on top of its buildings – atop Den Gamle Rådhus in particular. A pair of storks usually arrives in late March or early April (the male first, the female shortly after), which is a very welcome sign of spring for Ribe residents. The feathered pair sets up house and nests for the summer, hatching a young brood before leaving for Africa at the end of August.

In recent years, however, things haven't been going as planned. Blame global warming and/or strange local weather patterns – no storks arrived in Ribe in 2007 (in 2006 the male arrived and his female counterpart didn't show, so he hot-footed it out of Ribe after only a few weeks). Disappointed locals and bird-watching visitors have felt their absence. The big question is – will the storks return again?

laj Gade 10; adult/child 40kr/free; ♿ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun Jul-Aug, 11am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-Dec & mid-Feb-Jun, closed Jan-mid-Feb; ☎) has been able to acquire some of Denmark's best works, including those by 19th-century 'Golden Age' painters. The singing birds outside present a glorious backdrop to collection pieces by big Danish names including Juel, Abildgaard, Eckersberg, Købke and Michael Ancher, and the garden area behind the museum (open to all) is just lovely.

MUSEET RIBES VIKINGER

To better come to grips with Ribe's Viking and medieval history, head along to see the informative displays of the **Museum of Ribe's Vikings** (☎ 76 88 11 22; www.ribesvikinger.dk; Odins Plads 1; adult/child 60kr/free; ♿ 10am-6pm Jul-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-Jun, closed Mon Nov-Mar; ☎). Two rooms provide snapshots of the town in AD 800 and during medieval times in 1500. These portrayals are complemented by rare archaeological finds and good explanations, which add real substance to the tales. There's also a thought-provoking 30-minute video of the legendary Viking era.

RIBE VIKINGECENTER

Embrace your inner Viking (well, leave aside the raping and pillaging part) at the **Ribe Vikingecenter** (☎ 75 41 16 11; www.ribevikingecenter.dk; Lustrupvej 4; adult/child 75/35kr; ♿ 11am-5pm daily Jul-Aug, 10am-3.30pm Mon-Fri May-Jun & Sep), a much more hands-on experience than the museum. It attempts to re-create a slice of life in Viking era Ribe using various reconstructions, including a 34m Fyrkat-style longhouse. The staff, dressed in period clothing, bake bread over open fires, demonstrate archery and Viking era crafts such as pottery and leatherwork, and offer falconry shows (at 1pm and 3pm in July and August, 12.30pm in May, June and

September). All of which you can actively partake in (and you'll no doubt learn more about Viking life than you could from a text-book). The centre is about 3km south of the town centre.

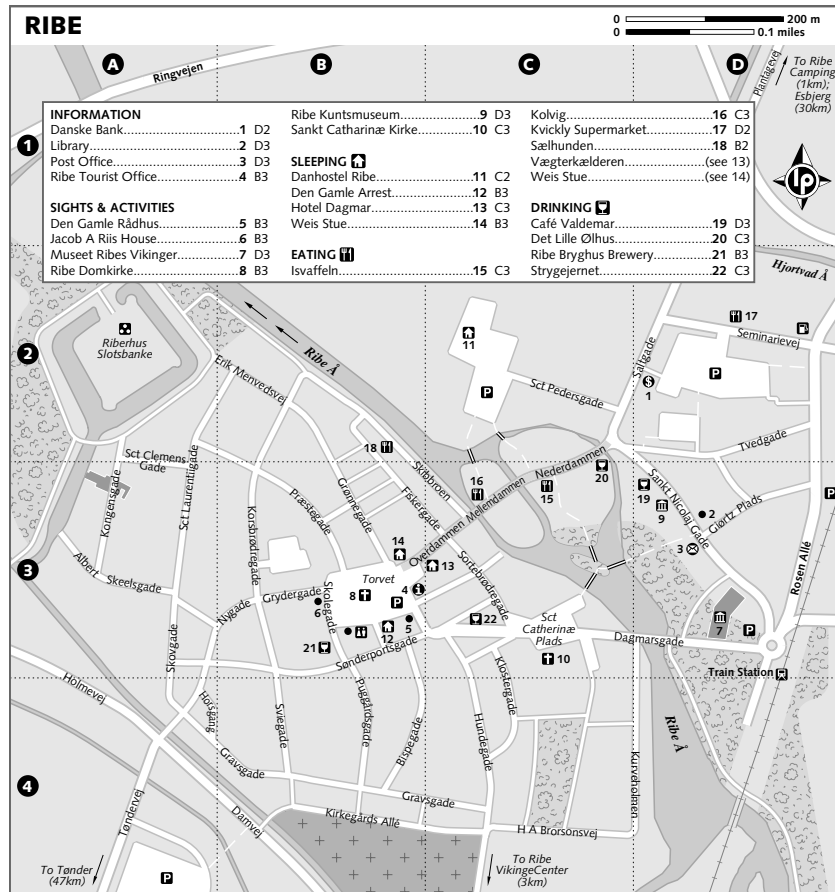
Walking Tour

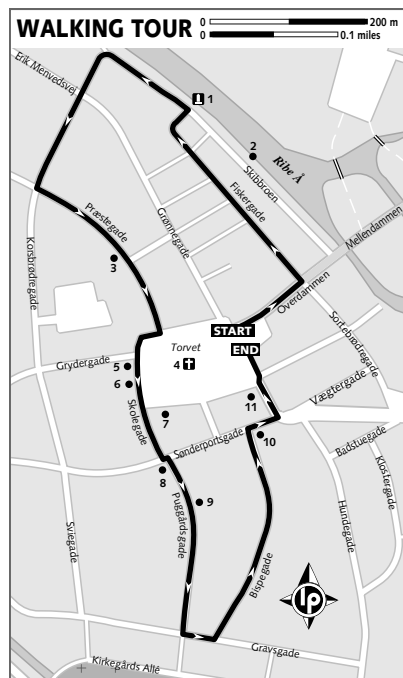
You can visit central Ribe's historic sights on a leisurely looped walk that takes no more than an hour. This walk affords you the chance to check out the residential side of the town rather than the major crowd-pulling sights outlined above; for more details, drop by the tourist office and grab a copy of the *Town Walk in Old Ribe* brochure (5kr).

The walk begins at Torvet and follows Overdammen a short way northeast to Fiskergade, where you turn left. On Fiskergade you'll notice many alleys leading east to the riverfront. Take a look at the black-painted 'bumper' stones on the house corners; the alleys are so narrow that the original residents installed these stones to protect their houses from being scraped by the wheels of horse-drawn carriages.

Where Fiskergade and Skibbroen meet, you'll come across **Stormflodssøjlen (1)**, a wooden flood column commemorating the numerous floods that have swept over Ribe. The ring at the top of the column indicates the water's depth during the record flood of 1634 (6m above normal!), which claimed hundreds of lives. Although these days a system of dikes affords low-lying Ribe somewhat more protection, residents are still subject to periodic flood evacuations.

At Stormflodssøjlen, look right along the waterfront and you'll spot **Johanne Dan (2)**, an old sailing ship designed with a flat bottom that allowed it to navigate through the shallow waters of the Ribe Å; an onboard visit is usually





only possible in conjunction with a guided tour (enquire at the tourist office).

Continue northwest along Skibbroen, which skirts the medieval quay, now lined with small motorboats. From Skibbroen, turn left onto Korsbrødregade and left again along Præstegade. About halfway down on the right, you'll pass this street's **oldest house (3)**, a half-timbered treasure at number 15, constructed in 1576. Continue on to **Ribe Domkirke (4)**; p239), skirting around the cathedral's western side and onto Skolegade.

On the corner of Skolegade and Grydergade is an **old grammar school (5)** that first opened in the early 16th century. Next door is the former **residence of Jacob A Riis (6)**; p239), with a plaque on the wall. On the opposite side of Skolegade is one of Denmark's oldest bishops' residences, the two-storey **Hans Tausens Hus (7)**, which dates from the early 17th century. A statue of Hans Tausen, who helped spark the Danish Reformation, stands in the churchyard opposite.

From Skolegade continue south on Puggårdsgade, a curved and cobbled street lined with older homes. The timber-framed **brick**

house (8) on the corner of Sønderportsgade and Puggårdsgade has an interesting 2nd storey that overhangs the road. A couple of buildings down on the left you'll find a 16th-century privately owned manor house, the charmingly skewwhiff **Taarnborg (9)**, where no corner is 90 degrees. Next door at number 5 is a half-timbered house dating from 1550.

When you reach Gravsgade go left, then left onto Bispegade. On the corner of Bispegade and Sønderportsgade you'll find a **memorial tablet (10)** dedicated to Maren Spliid, who was burned at the stake on 9 November 1641, the last victim of Denmark's witch-hunt persecutions.

From that corner continue north past **Den Gamle Rådhus (11)**; p240), and back to your starting point on Torvet.

Tours

As well as the very popular night watchman tour, the tourist office also stages guided 90-minute **town walks** (€ 11.30am Mon-Fri Jul-Aug; adult/child 60kr/free) in peak season, but at the time of research these were only being conducted in Danish and German. The summertime **ghost walks** (€ 9pm Wed Jul-Aug; adult/child 50kr/free) operated by Museet Ribes Vikinger (p241) show the town in a whole new light – listen out for tales of the last woman to be burnt to death in Ribe, accused of witchcraft by a paranoid community. Walks are staged once a week, in Danish, German and English.

Sleeping

The tourist office distributes an annually updated brochure listing some 30 private homes in and around Ribe that rent good-value rooms and apartments – in town single/double rooms cost around 300/400kr and apartments 450kr; on the outskirts single/double rooms cost 200/300kr and apartments 350kr. You can see pictures of the accommodation at the tourist office.

Ribe Camping (€ 75 41 07 77; www.ribecamping.dk; Farupvej 2; per adult/child/site 55/25/25kr; ☑ ☒) Just 1.5km north of the town centre lies this busy, well-equipped camping ground bursting with good cheer and excellent amenities; a heated swimming pool, wi-fi, rental bikes and playground are all at your disposal. There's also some pretty swanky cabins for hire (with Jacuzzi!), from 450kr. Local bus 715 can get you there.

Danhostel Ribe (€ 75 42 06 20; www.danhostel-ribe.dk; Sankt Pedersgade 16; dm 150kr, d 315-500kr; ☑) recep-

NIGHT WATCHMAN TOURS

One of the best free activities in Denmark is Ribe's 45-minute **night watchman tour** (€ 10pm May–mid Sep, also 8pm Jun–Aug), which departs from out the front of Weis Stue, on Torvet, once or twice a night in the warmer months. Nowadays, it's a stroll through the town's historic streets, designed to entertain and educate visitors to Ribe, but the night watchman's walk was originally born of necessity. As early as the 14th century these watchmen made their nightly rounds in Ribe, making sure the streets were safe for locals to walk. They were also charged with being on the lookout for fires or floods threatening the town. The job was abolished in Ribe in 1902, but reinstated in 1935 as a tourist attraction. These days interesting factual tidbits, singing and colourful stories of memorable Ribe citizens (in Danish and English) are just part of the act. Throw in narrow streets, pretty-as-a-picture houses and a late sundown and it's a great (free) way to end a history-soaked day.

tion 8am-noon & 4-6pm Feb-Nov; ☑ ☒) Ideal location, energetic staff, sparkling rooms (all with bathroom) and impressive facilities make this a fine option suited to both backpackers and families. It rents out bikes and is a stone's throw from Ribe's historic centre; equally impressive is its commitment to the environment (there's even 'Good Origin' coffee in the vending machine, traceable from farm to cup).

Weis Stue (€ 75 42 07 00; www.weisstue.dk; Torvet 2; s/d without bathroom 445/645kr) This is the poorer, quirkiest but no less charming sister to Hotel Dagmar. An ancient wooden-beamed house from 1600, it has small, crooked rooms above its restaurant, but they have lashings of character – creaking boards, sloping walls and low overhead beams. There are only eight rooms, and breakfast is taken at Hotel Dagmar (and worth getting out of bed for). Good value.

Den Gamle Arrest (€ 75 42 37 00; www.dengamlearrest.dk; Torvet 11; r with bathroom 790-940kr, without bathroom 590-740kr) You need to be creative when turning jail cells into hotel rooms, and the people behind the creation of these rooms can take a bow. This superbly positioned building served as a jail right up until 1989; now it allows guests to satisfy any 'lock-in' fantasy within bright, simple rooms that maximise space, with a mezzanine level holding table and chairs above a roll-away bed. Most rooms have a washbasin but share bathroom facilities.

Hotel Dagmar (€ 75 42 00 33; www.hoteldagmar.dk; Torvet 1; s/d from 945/1145kr; ☑ ☒) Classy, central Hotel Dagmar is Denmark's oldest (1581) and exudes all the old-world charm you'd expect. There's a golden hue to the hallways and rooms, with old-world décor alongside tiling, artworks and antiques. Loads of atmosphere and a bumper breakfast add up to a pretty spe-

cial experience; see the website for packages involving meals and accommodation.

Eating

Weis Stue (€ 75 42 07 00; Torvet 2; lunch 64-159kr, dinner mains 120-200kr; ☑ lunch & dinner) Don't come here looking for modern, could-be-anywhere cuisine. As befits the setting (one of Denmark's oldest inns, wonky and charming), the menu is a traditionalist's dream. The large meat-and-potatoes portions are full of stodgy northern European flavour (pepper pork medallions, Wiener schnitzel, grilled veal liver), best washed down with locally brewed beer. There's loads of atmosphere, plus a kids' menu, but little joy for vegetarians.

Kolvig (€ 75 41 04 88; Mellemdammen 13; lunch 65-105kr, dinner mains 175-225kr; ☑ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Kolvig is gorgeously situated by the water, so alfresco dining is understandably popular and offers prime Ribe-watching. The menu is a good mix of traditional and modern; most interesting is the tapas plate of local flavours that includes lamb from Fanø plus shrimps, mussels and codfish.

Vægterkælderen (€ 75 42 00 33; Torvet 1; meals 72-235kr; ☑ lunch & dinner) In summer you won't catch anyone down in the night watchman's cellar – they're all sitting out on the main square. The timber-heavy décor down here seems made for cold weather – soft leather banquettes and booths (a touch dated but very cosy). The menu is huge and runs the gamut of small dishes, salads and smørrebrød to quality steaks.

Sælhunden (€ 75 42 09 46; Skibbroen 13; lunch 75-125kr, dinner mains 125-210kr; ☑ lunch & dinner) Top choice for a leisurely meal is this handsome old black-and-white restaurant down by the waterfront, with outdoor seating by the

Johanne Dan sailing ship. *Sælhund* means seal, so it's no surprise this place dedicates itself to serving the best seafood in town.

Pizza places and ice-cream sellers aren't hard to find along the main drag. On a warm day, **Isvaffeln** (Nederdammen 18; 2/3 scoops 17/21kr) is swamped with holidaymakers devouring the great ice-cream flavours.

The **Kvickly supermarket** (Seminarievej; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) is well placed for self-caterers staying at the hostel.

Drinking

Look out for Ribe Bryghus locally brewed beers at restaurants and bars around town, or pop into the **Ribe Bryghus brewery** (☎ 40 43 17 12; Skolegade 4b; ☎ 10am-1pm Sat) during its limited opening hours.

Strygjernet (☎ 75 41 13 51; Dagmarsgade 1; ☎ from 3pm Tue-Sat) A small and cosy two-storey pub with a flatiron triangular shape – it's a little slice of New York in Ribe. The top floor has just a handful of tables and looks out to the rådhus (look for storks!), or join the locals propping up the bar downstairs.

Det Lille Ølhus (☎ 75 41 01 12; Nederdammen 36; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Thu, 10am-7pm Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat) The Little Beer House sells interesting local and international beer – in bottles to take away, or on tap, to enjoy in the courtyard. There's also a good array of picnic-worthy deli products on offer, and homebaked cakes too (which don't necessarily work too well with beer, but hey it's worth a shot). See opposite for more.

Café Valdemar (☎ 75 42 42 03; Sankt Nicolaj Gade 6B; ☎ from 2pm Tue-Sat) The beach comes to Ribe! In the warmer months this place guarantees relaxation with its tropical outdoor furniture and a stretch of sand down to the gentle river, making it a perfect spot for lazy afternoon drinks. There's plenty of grass and a kids' play area, too.

Getting There & Away

Ribe is 31km south of Esbjerg via Rte 24 and 47km north of Tønder via Rte 11.

Trains from Ribe run hourly on weekdays and less frequently at weekends north to Esbjerg (65kr, 35 minutes) and south to Skærbæk for Rømø (23kr, 20 minutes) and Tønder (61kr, 50 minutes).

Getting Around

There's parking with a daytime two-hour limit around Torvet, a parking area with a

three-hour limit at Museet Ribes Vikinger, and parking with no time limit at the end of Sankt Pedersgade near the hostel, and just north of the train station.

Bicycles can be hired from Danhostel Ribe (p242) and cost 65/110kr for one/two days.

RØMØ

pop 1000

Summer sees the large island of Rømø fill with German tourists. This is hardly surprising given the entire west coast is one long, sandy beach that's prime happy-holiday turf, perfect for sun-bathing and sunset-watching or something more active. Rømø is connected to the mainland by a 10km causeway (with cycle lane). During the colder months it's a windswept sleeper with get-away-from-it-all charm that couldn't be more different to its busy summer incarnation.

Orientation & Information

As you cross the causeway, you continue straight to reach Lakolk, a large camping-ground-turned-village on the central west coast. It's also where you'll find the most popular beach – Lakolk Strand. Heading left (south) immediately after reaching Rømø takes you to Kongsmark, Havneby and the activity-rich Sønderstrand beach. If you head right (north) as you reach the island, you'll arrive at the historic centre, Toftum and Juvre. The far northern end of the island is a military zone (access prohibited).

Roads allow cars to access the beaches at Lakolk and Sønderstrand, and you can drive up and down the west coast along the sand.

The **tourist office** (☎ 74 75 51 30; www.romo.dk; Havnebyvej 30, Tvismark; ☎ 9am-5pm) is 1km south of the causeway and can arrange cottage rental. Surprisingly, internet is offered at **Statoil** (Juvrevej 3; per 30/60min 25/45kr; ☎ 7.30am-6pm) petrol station, just as you reach Rømø via the causeway.

Sights

Despite appearances it's not *all* about the beach on Rømø. Inland are thatched-roof houses nestled in scrubby pine woods, rolling grassland and the odd historic building. The handsome thatched **Kommandørgården** (☎ 74 75 52 76; Juvrevej 60, Toftum; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct), 1.5km north of the causeway, is the preserved home of one of Rømø's 18th-century whaling captains. It stands as testimony to the prosperity that such men brought to the island through their whal-

ing expeditions. It has Dutch tiles lining many walls and woodwork painted in rococo style (minimal labelling in English, however).

The 18th-century **Rømø Kirke** is on the main road in Kirkeby. It's noted for its unique Greenlandic gravestones (lining the northern wall of the churchyard), erected by sea captains and decorated with images of their boats and families.

Activities

HORSE RIDING

The beaches are perfect for an endless ride into the sunset. **Rømø Islændercenter** (☎ 74 75 51 22; Havnebyvej 201, Østerby), based at Hotel Kommandørgården, has a stable full of Icelandic horses and a range of rides to appeal to kids, beginners and more-experienced horse-folk, through forest and along the beach. A two-to-three-hour sunset tour costs 275kr, while a full-day tour to the north of Rømø costs 695kr.

Another reputable outfit, **Rømø Ranch** (☎ 74 75 54 11; www.romoranch.dk in Danish; Lakolk), has a stable of well-groomed horses backing on to Lakolk Beach. An hour on a pony/horse costs 89/95kr; there's a weekly programme of tours.

HIKING & WALKING

The inland section of Rømø has trails through heather moors and wooded areas, offering quiet hiking spots. There are three forest

zones, each with a couple of kilometres of trails: Tvismark Plantage, along Vesterhavsvvej, the main east-west road; Kirkeby Plantage, to the west of Kirkeby; and Vråby Plantage, a less-diverse area dominated by pines, about 1km further south.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

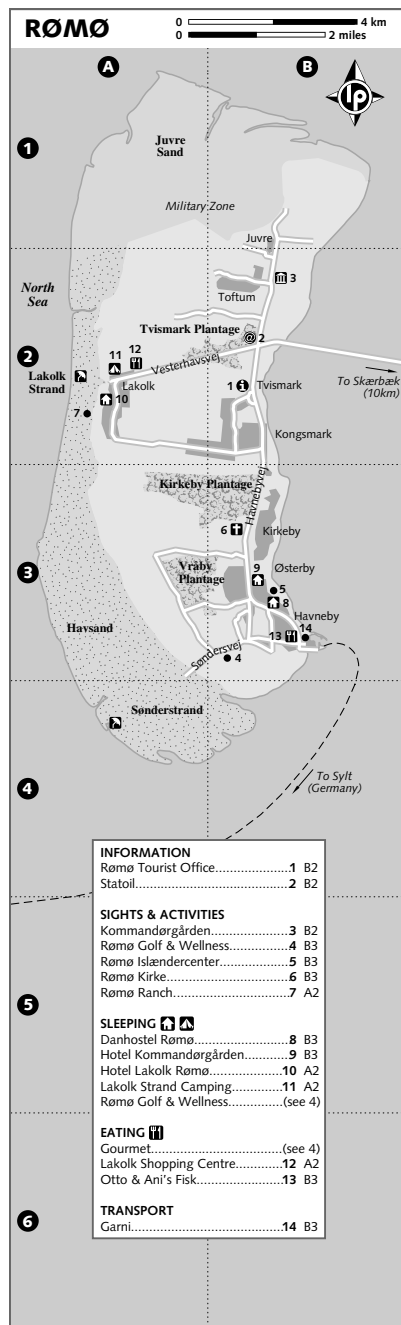
The long west-coast beach is divided into activity areas, with **windsurfing** a popular activity south of Lakolk. Most enthusiasts arrive with their own equipment, but if you come without, enquire at the tourist office (opposite) about possibilities (at the time of research there were no places offering gear rental).

At the southwest corner of the island is **Sønderstrand**, a remarkable sight – full of cars, colour and land-based activities making great use of the air that blows in fresh from the North Sea. There's a small area for parking your car where the sealed road reaches the sand, or you can continue driving on the beach itself (north as far as Lakolk). As the sealed road reaches Sønderstrand, to your left is an area dedicated to *strandsejlad*s, aka land-yachts or blokarts (a three-wheeled go-kart that utilises a sail to capture the wind). To the right, it's all about *kitebuggykørsel*, or buggies with attached parachuteline kites. Great speeds are reached, and it's quite a spectacle. If you want a crack at it, contact **Wind Rider** (☎ 22 85 50 15;

FANCY A BEER?

Beer has always been big business in Denmark (Carlsberg should need no introduction), but in recent years it's been all about the microbrews. There are now more than 100 small breweries in the country, and as one Århus local told us, 'no-one goes to wine-tasting anymore, you go and taste beer'. And we particularly loved the pithy answer given by Bo Hansen, co-owner of Det Lille Ølhus (opposite) in Ribe, when asked why there's been such a growth in independent breweries in Denmark in recent years. 'Because we were bored with drinking Carlsberg', he deadpans.

This beer explosion now means any Danish town worth its salt has its own bryghus (brewery), and many bars and pubs proudly list their boutique bottled offerings and changing draught beers, with obscure local drops getting a run next to the better-known brands. Various bars and stores are now catering to the more discerning beer-drinker. One such place is Det Lille Ølhus – as the name suggests, the Little Beer House sells, well, beer – but 'the kind of beer you won't find in a supermarket', according to Bo. It has a wide range of Danish and international microbrews for sale in its delicatessen, and a changing selection of boutique brews on tap – when we visited, this included Hulthin Red Ale, an English-style ale brewed by Winter Coat (a brewery outside Århus), two brews from the nearby Fanø brewery (a dark and a light beer), an obscure Czech drop, a German weissbier and a Belgian Trappist ale. The shelves are full of interesting drops, both local and imported (there's a surprising array from Oregon, USA), and the owners are on hand to offer advice. Bo and his brother Jens opened the shop in September 2006. Jens had previously run a smaller beer shop but knew the business of beer was growing; Bo is a baker by trade and he bakes the great bread sold in the delicatessen, and also the cakes and snacks you can buy to eat in the courtyard.



www.windtoysdk.com; ☎ May-Aug), which offers a three-hour introductory course in blokarting for 450kr. Various small German operators set up for buggy rental – walk along the beach and see what you can arrange if you're feeling adventurous.

The swanky new **Rømø Golf & Wellness** (☎ 70 23 77 47; www.rgw.dk; Havneby), en route to Sønderstrand, is home to a relaxation-inducing wellness spa (no kids under 16 allowed) and indoor swimming pool (open to all), and a challenging links golf course (green fees 295kr to 395kr); club and buggy hire is available.

Sleeping

The vast majority of accommodation is found in some 1500 summerhouses scattered around the island, which are usually rented by the week. Prices vary, depending on the season and the degree of luxury. The tourist office (p244) can provide a catalogue and handle the bookings.

Lakolk Strand Camping (☎ 74 75 52 28; www.lakolcamping.dk; Lakolk; camp site per adult/child 71/42kr; ☎ Apr-Oct; ☎) In high summer, the beachside camping ground and shopping centre at Lakolk is holiday heaven or hell, depending on your outlook. It's bursting at the seams with families praying for good weather and seeking fun-in-the-sun action; the huge camping ground is wall-to-wall with camper vans and all the requisite facilities, including rental of onsite caravans and cabins.

Danhostel Rømø (☎ 74 75 51 88; www.danhostel.dk/romo; Lyngvejen 7, Østerby; dm 150kr, d 192-300kr; ☎ mid-Mar–Oct) A picturesque red, thatched-roof complex that's well hidden off the main road and set among pines, but walking distance to a supermarket and bakery. The rooms (a few with bathroom) are basic but spick-and-span, and the quiet outdoor areas beckon for a complete holiday wind-down.

Hotel Lakolk Rømø (☎ 74 75 51 45; www.hotel-lakolk.dk; Lakolk 150; s/d/f from 495/695/995kr) Compared to the crowds of the camping ground, this hotel offers relative calm. It's pretty good value, too, given it's just a short walk over the dunes to the long, sandy beach. There are smallish, modern rooms on offer, some with kitchenette, plus apartments (three-day stay from 1295kr).

Hotel Kommandørgården (☎ 74 75 51 22; www.kommandoergaarden.dk; Havnebyvej, Østerby; camp sites per adult/child 69/37kr, per site 18-28kr, hotel s/d from 595/795kr, apt from 695kr; ☎ ☎ ☎) This resort

needs its own postcode! It's got everything from camping and cabins to hotel rooms and apartments, and a restaurant and bar. Plus there are activities laid on thick, including a wellness centre, bike hire, kayaking, horse riding and swimming pool. It's astonishingly big and impressively run.

Rømø Golf & Wellness (☎ 70 23 77 47; www.rgw.dk; Havneby; houses 1900-2950kr; ☎ ☎) A luxury-leaning playground for grown-ups, populated by suntanned northern Europeans who have perfected the art of smart-casual dressing. They're here enjoying the new links golf course, wellness centre, gourmet restaurant and huge complex of spanking-new two-bedroom, fully equipped houses (sleeping up to six). There are plenty of weekly deals and golf/wellness packages.

Eating

Havneby is the island's culinary hot spot, with a good array of mostly family-oriented eateries. At Lakolk shopping centre there's a supermarket, bakery and and some casual refuelling spots including a bistro, Irish-style pub, summer nightclub, pizzeria and cafeteria.

Otto & Ani's Fisk (☎ 74 75 53 06; Havnespladsen, Havneby; snacks & meals 30-165kr; ☎ 11am-8pm) Right on the harbourside at Havneby, so the fish are as fresh as they come. Pull up a pew outside, feast on fish and chips (55kr) or a bread roll filled with Rømø shrimp (40kr), and revel in the fact that you're on holiday. You can also buy fresh uncooked fish and seafood, and smoked fishy delicacies.

Gourmet (☎ 70 23 77 47; Havneby; lunch mains 49-179kr, dinner mains 170-210kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) If you name a restaurant Gourmet, you better be pretty certain you can back it up. This new place at Rømø Golf & Wellness has certainly got the setting and the décor right, and is home to the island's loveliest terrace. The lunch menu holds few surprises but plenty of smørrebrød and seafood. The kitchen really struts its stuff of an evening, with high-class Rømø produce aplenty (local lamb, organic chicken, Rømø shrimps). Top stuff.

Getting There & Away

Rømø is on Rte 175, about 14km west of Skærbæk. Bus 29 runs from Skærbæk to Havneby (30kr, 45 minutes) about hourly on weekdays, and less often at weekends. From Skærbæk there are hourly trains to Ribe (23kr, 20 min-

utes), Tønder (36kr, 30 minutes) and Esbjerg (51kr, 55 minutes).

The **SyltExpress** (☎ 73 75 53 03; www.syltfaehre.de in Danish) is a car ferry that operates between Havneby and the nearby German island of Sylt (car one way including passengers 305kr, adult one way 45/58kr) several times a day.

Getting Around

About 10 times a day on weekdays (considerably less on weekends), bus 29 makes a trip from Havneby up the east-coast road before pressing on to mainland Skærbæk (and vice versa). A number of these trips run via Lakolk.

If you don't have your own transport, the best option is to rent a bicycle from **Garni** (☎ 74 75 54 80; Nørre Frankel 15, Havneby; per day/week from 40/200kr), as Rømø is as flat as a pancake and perfect for cycling.

TØNDER

pop 7900

The record books say 1243 but talk to any local and they'll say the bloodlines run deeper into the past – so it's little wonder Tønder lays unofficial claim to the title of Denmark's oldest town. It's an inviting place that's had a rocky journey through serious flooding to German annexation; strong German links remain (not surprising, given Tønder's proximity to the border, just 4km south).

During the 16th century a series of dikes were erected to prevent the imminent threat of flooding. In doing so the town isolated itself from its sea-port connection and turned elsewhere for economic prosperity. Lace-making was introduced – an economic windfall that employed up to 12,000 workers during its peak in the 18th century. These days tourism adds a fair kick to the town – its an eminently

A WHALE OF A TIME

Between 1650 and 1850, many Rømø men worked as whalers off Greenland – this is still regarded as the golden age of the island. Skilled, confident and fearless fishermen from Rømø captained Dutch and German ships on dangerous voyages north to catch whales. Some returned rich, some didn't return at all. A trip to Rømø Kirke and Kommandørgården illustrates the sacrifice and rewards involved.

agreeable little place with drawcards out of proportion to its size.

There are a couple of banks near Torvet, the central square, as well as the helpful **tourist office** (☎ 74 72 12 20; www.visittonder.dk; Torvet 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat Jul-mid-Aug, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat mid-Aug-Jun), which has information on the town and Møgelthønder, plus internet access.

Sights

To glimpse the past, head south from Torvet along Søndergade and turn right into Uldgade. The cobbled street has Tønder's best collection of unique gabled houses.

The multifaceted **Tønder Museum** (☎ 74 72 89 89; Kongevej 51; adult/child 40kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-May) has three components: first, a cultural history museum housing a collection of delicate Tønder lace and decoratively painted furniture. In the adjacent wing is Sønderjyllands Kunstmuseum, full of Danish surrealist and modern art. Our favourite feature, however, is the water tower, which you can climb for sweeping views of the town and surrounding countryside (or take the lift up and walk down). On each of the tower's seven floors are the fabulous chair designs of locally born Hans Wegner, one of the most innovative and prolific of all Danish furniture designers. You will no doubt have seen his designs on your travels through Denmark – check out the ox chair on the 5th floor, the quirky valet chair on the 4th floor, and the great winged easy chair on the 3rd floor.

The grand old **Kristkirken** (Torvet; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat) on the northeastern side of Torvet dates back to 1592. Its opulent interior came courtesy of the town's rich cattle- and lace-merchants, who invested heavily between the late 17th and 18th centuries. The church interior boasts impressive carvings and paintings, including a rare baptismal font from 1350, an ornate pulpit from 1586 and a series of memorial tablets from around 1600. The 47.5m-high tower, part of an earlier church that stood at the same site, doubled as a navigational marker in the days when Tønder was connected to the sea.

Det Gamle Apotek (☎ 74 72 51 11; Østergade 1; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm), beside Torvet, has an elaborate 1671 baroque doorway flanked by two lions that stand guard over the old-fashioned interior and extensive gift-shop collection (everything you never thought you'd need, and then some).

Festivals & Events

Growing in reputation and scale each year, the **Tønder Festival** (☎ 74 72 46 10; www.tf.dk) takes place in the last week of August and draws people from all corners of the country. It's regarded as one of the best folk music festivals in Europe, with loads of Irish music and a friendly, fun atmosphere.

Sleeping

The tourist office can provide a list of private rooms in homes in the Tønder area, with prices around 300kr for a double. For something special, head to the old *kro* (inn) in Møgelthønder.

Tønder Camping (☎ 74 72 18 49; www.sydvest.dk in Danish; Holmevej 2; camp sites per adult/child 62/25kr; ☎ Apr-Oct) Southeast of the town centre and adjacent to the hostel, this well-maintained ground boasts good prices and a neighbouring sports centre, plus offers cheap onsite caravans and simple cabins for rent (from 295kr).

Danhostel Tønder (☎ 74 72 35 00; www.danhostel.dk/tonder; Sønderport 4; dm 150kr, s&d 360kr; ☎ Feb-mid-Dec; ☎) Cut (☎) from the same cloth as other Southern Jutland Danhostels, this is a plain, low-slung brick building with plentiful rooms (all with bathroom), appealing communal areas and fresh, clean facilities. It's a few minutes' walk southeast of the town centre.

Hostrups Hotel (☎ 74 72 21 29; www.hostrupshotel.dk; Søndergade 30; s/d from 380/490kr) The low prices, then the worn carpet in the halls, may set off alarm bells, but there's no need – the Danes simply don't do dingy décor! Rooms here are fresh and bright, spotlessly white from the furniture to the linen, and very well priced. This pretty green-coloured hotel is opposite a small lake – try for a room that overlooks it.

Eating & Drinking

Café Engel (☎ 74 72 70 80; Gråbrodre Torv; sandwiches 35-59kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat) At the end of Uldgade, this place has a gorgeously simple, streamlined interior, pretty seating on the square outside, and a small but tempting menu of sandwiches (try one with salmon and homemade tzatziki).

our pick Victoria (☎ 74 72 00 89; Storgade 9; lunch 39-99kr, dinner mains 75-198kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) At the turn of the 19th century Tønder had a world-beating one bar for every 49 inhabitants. Only the Victoria kicks on now (after an unfortunate spell as a missionary hotel where no alcohol was served) as a jack-of-

all-trades pub/café/restaurant. It's a winner, with friendly, helpful staff, old-world timber-rich décor and a good range of international and local beers (try the Victoria, a stout beer brewed for the pub according to an old recipe). The menu is long, varied (burgers, burritos, pasta, spare ribs) and well priced; unless you order from the steak menu, dinner mains come in under 100kr.

There are other options around Torvet, including **Klostercafeen** (Torvet), in Tønder's oldest house (from 1520 and boasting beautiful old tiles). The square is also home to a photogenic market selling fruit, vegetables and cheese on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

Getting There & Around

Tønder is on Rte 11, 4km north of the border with Germany and 77km south of Esbjerg. The train station is on the western side of town, 1km from Torvet via Vestergade. Trains run hourly on weekdays and slightly less frequently at weekends to/from Ribe (61kr, 50 minutes) and Esbjerg (88kr, 1½ hours). Bus 66 to Møgelthønder (15kr, 10 minutes) leaves from Kongevej.

Top Cyclist (☎ 74 72 18 81; Nørremarksvej 29) rents bikes for 65kr per day.

MØGELTHØNDER

This little village is impossibly cute. If you could, you'd wrap it up and take it home for your grandmother. A royal castle, one of the most beautiful streets in Jutland and a church rich in frescoes are some of the joys to be found here. It may also appeal to single girls looking to fulfil princess fantasies – but possibly not for too much longer...

On the eastern edge of town is **Schackenberg**, a small castle that was presented by the Crown to Field Marshal Hans Schack in 1661 following his victory over the Swedes in the battle of Nyborg. Eleven generations of Schacks lived there until 1978, when it was returned to the royal family.

In 1995 Queen Margrethe's youngest son, Prince Joachim, married Hong Kong-born Alexandra and the newlyweds made Schackenberg their primary residence, completing the fairy-tale town. Joachim farms the surrounding land (he has a background in agriculture) and the couple have two sons, Princes Nikolai and Felix. But the fairy tale lost its sheen, however, when Joachim and Alexandra divorced in 2005. Alexandra has

since remarried, and at the time of research Joachim was 'stepping out' with a French woman... Anyhoo, you can see Schackenberg from the street, and while you can't join the inhabitants for a lazy brunch, the moat-surrounded grounds on the opposite side of the street have been turned into a small public park that you're free to enjoy. From mid-May to August there are in-demand guided tours of the **castle gardens** (adult/child 25/20kr) one or two afternoons a week – make enquiries regarding times and bookings with the Tønder tourist office (opposite).

Continue along Slotsgade and soak up the market-village feel of this street with its immaculate, tightly packed houses. Look behind the houses and you'll notice that the blocks open into green fields – it's not a crammed market town at all, rather a purpose-built picturesque street.

At the western end of Slotsgade is **Møgelthønder Kirke** (Slotsgade 1; ☎ 8am-4pm May-Sep, 9am-4pm Oct-Apr), a feast for the senses with its incredibly lavish interior. The Romanesque nave dates back to 1180 and the baptismal font is from 1200. The church has had many additions, however, as the Gothic choir vaults were built during the 13th century, the tower dates from about 1500 and the chapel on the northern side was added in 1763. The interior is rich in frescoes, gallery paintings and ceiling drawings. You'll also find here the oldest functioning church organ in Denmark, dating from 1679. The elaborately detailed gilt altar dates back to the 16th century. Note the 'countess' bower, a balcony with private seating for the Schack family, who owned the church from 1661 until 1970.

Sleeping & Eating

Schackenberg Slotskro (☎ 74 73 83 83; www.slotskro.dk; Slotsgade 42; s/d from 995/1225kr) With the palace as its neighbour and Prince Joachim as a part-owner, this classy old inn can claim tiptop royal connections. It has 25 rooms, at the inn and in three nearby houses, each with garden; rooms are a little pricey but are elegant and well equipped. Foodwise, the *slotskro* has a fine reputation for traditional Danish cooking and makes a lovely spot for a lunch (86kr to 158kr) of salmon or herring, an afternoon coffee-and-cake pit stop (62kr) or the full-blown waistband-expanding evening treatment (dinner mains 158kr to 238kr, or four-/six-course menu 438/598kr).

ROYAL CONNECTIONS

Looking for more royal connections as you tour Jutland? Head to Gråsten (right), and Marselisborg Palace in Århus (p262). And if you can't get there, check out all the castles in miniature plastic detail at Legoland (p281)!

Mormors Lille Café (☎ 73 72 54 55; Slotsgade 9; cakes 20-32kr, meals 69-119kr; ☎ 11am-6pm summer) 'Grandma's little café' is perfectly in keeping with the village's character, cute as a button under its low, thatched roof, surrounded by outdoor tables and flowerbeds. Traditional light meals include *frikadeller* (meatballs), sandwiches or herring, but it's the home-baked cakes (try the *lagkage*, or layer cake, a Danish favourite) and the delicate china teapots and coffeepots that really warmed our heart.

Getting There & Away

Mogeltønder is 5km west of Tønder on Rte 419. Bus 66 connects Tønder with Mogeltønder (15kr, 10 minutes) roughly hourly on weekdays, less frequently at weekends.

PADBORG & FRØSLEVLEJREN

pop 4850

The town of Padborg, right by the German border, is the site of Frøslevlejren (Frøslev Camp), an internment camp opened near the end of WWII following negotiations with Germany to keep the Danish POWs in Denmark (despite this agreement 1600 Danish patriots were deported to the horrors of concentration camps in Germany). During its nine months in operation Frøslev held 12,000 prisoners.

Frøslevlejrens Museum (☎ 74 67 65 57; www.frøslevlejrensmuseum.dk in Danish; Lejrvej 83; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-4pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Aug-Nov & Feb-mid-June, closed Dec & Jan) tells fascinating stories of the Danish Resistance movement and daily prison life at Frøslev. If you've visited other German-run wartime camps, you're in for a surprise here. A shining light in the German POW camps, Frøslev had ample food, no torture and no executions (prisoners were even allowed one visitor per month). The only real horror was the threat of deportation across the border.

Frøslevlejren is on the northwestern outskirts of Padborg, 1km west of the E45 (take exit 76). There are no buses – without your

own wheels you'll need to walk or take a cab the 2km or so from Padborg train station.

GRÅSTEN

pop 3300

For three weeks each summer this sleepy town is abuzz as Queen Margrethe and Prince Henrik (and perhaps the extended family) head down for some R&R at their summer residence, away from the hectic capital. When they're not visiting, the lovely palace gardens are open to the public; it makes a good half-day trip from Sønderborg.

The **tourist office** (☎ 74 65 09 55; www.visitsonderborg.com; Kongevej 71; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri year-round, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat mid-Jun-Aug) is at the train station, 1km south of the castle.

Sights

The town's undeniable crowd-puller is the majestic **Gråsten Palace** (☎ 74 65 14 54; www.ses.dk/graastenpalace) on the banks of the lake, Slotssø. The palace itself has had a stormy history: it was originally built in the middle of the 16th century but destroyed by fire in 1603. It was rebuilt, only to be ravaged by the same culprit in 1757; in 1842 the main building you see today was constructed, and in 1935 the rights to the castle were handed to the royal family.

When the HRHs aren't in town you can visit the **palace gardens** (☎ from 7.30am year-round) to envy the green fingers behind this abundance of flora. Queen Ingrid designed the garden and drew on English influences in landscaping for inspiration. It's a wonderful place to wander and a perfect spot to bring a picnic; seasonal closing times vary from 4.30pm in winter to 8pm in summer. The only part of the palace open to the public is the richly adorned **chapel** (☎ 2-4pm Wed, Sat & Sun Apr-Oct), built between 1699 and 1702 and the only section of the old castle to survive the fire of 1757.

Getting There & Away

Gråsten is on Rte 8, 15km west of Sønderborg and 23km northeast of Padborg. Trains run to Gråsten from Kolding (change trains at Tinglev; 108kr, 1¼ hours) and continue on to Sønderborg (45kr, 15 minutes). Bus 10 also operates between Gråsten and Sønderborg (45kr).

SØNDERBORG

pop 27,400

Sønderborg, nestled on both sides of the Als Sund (Als Sound), nurtures a modern, cosmo-

politan ambience despite its medieval origins. In 1169 Valdemar I (the Great) erected a castle fortress along the waterfront and the town has since spread out from there, with fishing as the economic mainstay.

To some degree the town has shaped Denmark, acting as the battleground for two wars against Germany in the middle of the 19th century. In 1864, during the battle of Dybbøl, Danish forces gathered here while a bombardment of 80,000 German shells paved the way for the German occupation of Jutland for some 60 years. After WWI the region once again became Danish soil. Reconstruction of the city since that fateful war has led to its modern feel and a bombardment of another kind – the annual descent of German and Danish holidaymakers. There's not as much English spoken in these parts; understandably, German is the second language for many.

Orientation

Sønderborg spreads along both sides of the Als Sund, joined by two bridges. The town centre and Sønderborg Slot are to the east, on the island of Als. The Dybbøl area and the train station are on the western side (part of mainland Jutland). There's a small, sandy beach right in town by the southern side of the castle.

Information

Banks can be found on the pedestrian street Perlegade, immediately north of Rådhusortvet.

Matrix Netcafé (☎ 74 43 55 55; Longang 29; per hr 15kr; ☎ 2-11pm Mon-Thu, noon-midnight Fri-Sun) Off the northern end of Perlegade.

Post office (Rådhusortvet 1)

Tourist office (☎ 74 42 35 55; www.visitsonderborg.com; Rådhusortvet 7; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) On the main square.

Sights & Activities

Sønderborg Castle (Sønderbro 1) dates back to about 1170, when a stronghold was built on the site in the defence against the Wends; later bastions were added for further fortification. Between 1532 and 1549 the castle was used to hold the deposed king, Christian II; rather than be confined to the dungeon he was free to stroll the grounds and enjoy the royal chambers. In the late 16th century the fortified castle was turned into a royal residence; the castle took on its baroque appearance during further restorations in 1718. During the German occupation it was used as a German barracks.

In 1568 under the reign of Queen Dorothea, widow of King Christian III, Denmark's first Lutheran chapel was constructed. The chapel still stands today, and rates as one of Europe's oldest preserved royal chapels.

Nowadays the castle houses **Museet på Sønderborg Slot** (Museum at Sønderborg Castle; ☎ 74 42 25 39; adult/child 30kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm daily May-Sep, 1-4pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr), which has exhibits on the wars of 1848 and 1864 as well as paintings from the Danish 'Golden Age' and insight into the political history of the region. The castle is also the site of spooky **ghost tours** (tickets 75kr, no children under 10), held twice weekly from June to August. At the time of research the tours were only conducted in Danish and German, but make enquiries at the tourist office.

On 18 April 1864 the German army steamrolled the Danes and took control of Southern Jutland until the end of WWI. Danish men were forced to fight for Germany in WWI on both fronts. On the western edge of town, **Dybbøl Banke Battlefield Centre '1864'** (☎ 74 48 90 00; www.1864.dk in Danish; Dybbøl Banke; adult 45-60kr, child 18kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Easter-Sep; ☎) gives an informative glimpse into the bloody war of 1864. Although it offers typically high-quality displays of a very important time, if you're not Danish, German or have an interest in military history, it can probably be skipped. Bus 1 runs out here from town.

The **Dybbøl Mølle** (☎ 74 48 69 71; Dybbøl Banke; adult/child 25/10kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Easter-Sep) windmill has been bombed twice and now stands as a national symbol. The museum exhibits here cover the mill's history and also explain the symbolism of the site.

For wanderings in the city, the tourist office publishes glossy English-language brochures detailing various architectural periods such as old Sønderborg, with buildings from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; the city's Art Nouveau treasures; or modern features.

Sleeping

Sønderborg Camping (☎ 74 42 41 89; Ringgade 7; www.sonderborgcamping.dk in Danish; per adult/child/site 68/30/18kr; ☎ Apr-Sep) In an idyllic position next to the yacht marina, a lovely 10-minute walk into town along the waterfront. It's a family-friendly, amenity-rich place where sites are in high demand come summer – book ahead. Cabins and onsite caravans can be hired.

Danhostel Sønderborg (☎ 74 42 31 12; www.sonderborgdanhostel.dk; Kærvej 70; dm/s/d 150/360/420kr;

☞ Feb–mid-Dec; ☞) Just 10 minutes north of the town centre, this modern hostel is built around some lovely garden areas, complete with outdoor furniture and barbecues. All rooms have bathroom. It's a classy place for a budget bed – note that beds in dorms are only offered from June to August.

Hotel Sønderborg Garni (☎ 74 42 34 33; www.hotel-soenderborg.dk; Kongevej 96; s/d from 580/850kr) Friendly service and a prime location in an upmarket residential neighbourhood soften the slightly spooky appearance of this small hotel (complete with turret). The 1904 building has only 18 rooms, all slightly different (the cheapest singles are tiny but comfy) and a homely, relaxed feel. Rates drop on weekends and in summer.

Eating & Drinking

You'll find a good selection of eateries down by the harbour and on Rådhusstrøvet.

Maybe Not Bob (☎ 74 43 08 22; Rådhusstrøvet 5; sandwiches & snacks 25-50kr; ☞ 11am-late Mon-Sat) Staff here couldn't explain this pub's name, bestowed by a previous owner. But we don't need anyone to explain the appeal of the youthful crowd, outdoor tables, free-flowing beer and cheap pub grub (burgers, burritos, sandwiches).

Café Ib Rehne Cairo (☎ 74 42 04 00; Rådhusstrøvet 4; meals 56-149kr; ☞ lunch & dinner; ☞) What is it with Sønderborg and strange names? The story behind the name is probably more interesting than the food on offer: Ib Rehne was a veteran Danish correspondent, stationed in Cairo for a spell. His well-known sign-off, 'Ib Rehne, Cairo' has become the name of this cool café-bar. Still, Ib himself seems to bear little relation to the fresh décor and crowd-pleasing menu. The alfresco tables on the square get a workout from brunch time, but there's also a loungey area inside, perfect for cocktails.

OX-EN Latino Steakhouse (☎ 74 42 27 07; Brogade 2; mains 98-239kr; ☞ dinner) Prime Argentinian steaks have found themselves halfway across the globe to be salivated over at this chic, busy harbour restaurant. If you don't get your kicks from meat, you might like to know there are a couple of fish dishes on the menu – otherwise we're talking meat, meat and more meat (and Chilean wines).

Getting There & Around

Sønderborg is 30km northeast of the German border crossing at Kruså, via Rte 8.

Sønderborg is connected by numerous trains to Kolding (125kr, 1½ hours) and the rest of Jutland and northern Germany (most destinations involve a change of trains in Tinglev). The train station is on the western side of town, by the modern Alsjon building. Buses 1 and 8 stop here from the centre of town.

A bike is handy if you're planning to explore the sights and nearby Als. At the time of research, the closest bike-rental place was in Vollerup, 5km out of town; enquire at the tourist office to see if there's now somewhere closer.

ALS

The island of Als, separated from Jutland by the thin Als Sund, is relatively untouched by large-scale tourism and provides visitors with a snapshot of the laid-back Danish country lifestyle. It's a good region for lazy drives or cycling (bus schedules can be erratic). Down south is where the best beaches lie, while up the east coast you'll encounter engaging little villages. And camping grounds are everywhere, heaving in summer with Danes and Germans. Information and maps for the area can be obtained from the Sønderborg tourist office (p251); for island-hoppers there's a ferry from Mommark on Als' east coast across to Søby on the island of Ærø, and one from Fynshav to Funen's Bøjden.

Augustenborg, 10km northeast of Sønderborg along Rte 8, is one of Als' more easily accessible and interesting villages. Spend an afternoon wandering around the lush gardens of the grand yellow-and-white **Augustenborg Slot** – you'll be following in the footsteps of Hans Christian Andersen, who used to visit the duke and his family and sought peace and tranquillity here. The castle is no longer used by the Duke of Augustenborg; rather it serves as a psychiatric hospital. There is a small exhibition in the gatehouse, and the lavish palace chapel is also open to the public in summer. Bus 13 regularly connects Sønderborg with Augustenborg.

Als' big-ticket drawcard is the new **Danfoss Universe** (☎ 74 88 74 88; www.danfossuniverse.com; Mads Patent Vej 1, Nordborg; adult 60-135kr, child 50-110kr; ☞ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar; ☞), off Rte 405 en route north to Nordborg. It's an 'experience park for the curious', according to its marketing; it opened in mid-2005 and is proving a popular attraction for families and schools. One local pithily

summed it up as 'brain gymnastics' and the country's minister for education has given it a shiny gold star, encouraging all Danish Grade 7s (12 to 13 year olds) to visit. There are more than 200 attractions enabling you to discover how nature and technology work. But education while you're on holidays? Well, yes. It's all well-designed, superinteractive fun and will

stop the kids bothering you with questions you struggle to answer (How does a fridge work? Where does wind come from?). Heck, you might even learn something yourself.

Prices for Danfoss Universe are at their highest from April to October, when there are more activities going on. The park is about 30km from Sønderborg; bus 13 will get you here.

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