

# Southern Zealand



Towns in this nontouristy region are primarily modern, and most people shoot through them on their way to the southern beaches or to Jutland. However, there are nuggets of gold to be panned from the gravel.

Køge is the prettiest town in the area, a delightfully preserved cobbled place, with a medieval church and half-timbered houses straight from the lid of a chocolate box. Nearby is the adorable hamlet of Vallø, with a fairy-tale moated castle complete with frogs on lily pads. The third historical settlement worth your time is Sorø, again rich in history and tilted wooden homes.

Viking fans have a gem in the remains of 1000-year-old Trelleborg, the best-preserved ring fortress in Scandinavia. It's an evocative site, deep in Denmark's rural heart and pretty much unencumbered by modern buildings and roads – squint, and you can almost believe yourself back in Harald Bluetooth's time.

If you have kids, then Næstved is a must. Within a radius of 10km you'll find the theme park BonBon-Land; FantasyLand, an indoor playground for younger kids; Holmegaard Glassworks, where your young 'uns can engrave their names on glass or blow their own masterpiece; Næstved Zoo; and child-friendly beaches at Karrebæksminde.

The triangular region between Næstved in the south and Sorø and Korsør to the north is spotted with forests, small lakes and streams, as close to undomesticated nature as you'll find in Zealand. Hire a canoe in Næstved and explore the waterways at your leisure.

If you're travelling across the region between Køge and Korsør using your own transport, the rural Rte 150 makes an excellent alternative to zipping along on the E20 motorway.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Ride the Wild Boar rollercoaster, voted the best in Denmark, at the BonBon-Land theme park near **Næstved** (p152)
- Puzzle over the enigmatic remains of the Viking ring fortress at **Trelleborg** (p147)
- Treat your loved one to a weekend at the romantic cliff-top hotel in **Præsto** (p154)
- Admire the medieval town of **Køge** (p138) – its narrow streets of half-timbered buildings hide Denmark's oldest house
- Kiss a frog outside the fairy-tale castle at **Vallø** (p142), and see if it turns into a prince!



## Getting There & Around

Like that of North Zealand, the transportation system in Southern Zealand is linked to Copenhagen and just about all of the region can be reached in an hour from the capital. Having your own transport is more important, though, since the destinations are more scattered than in the north and a good amount of the region's appeal lies in the pastoral scenery witnessed as you travel through.

## KØGE

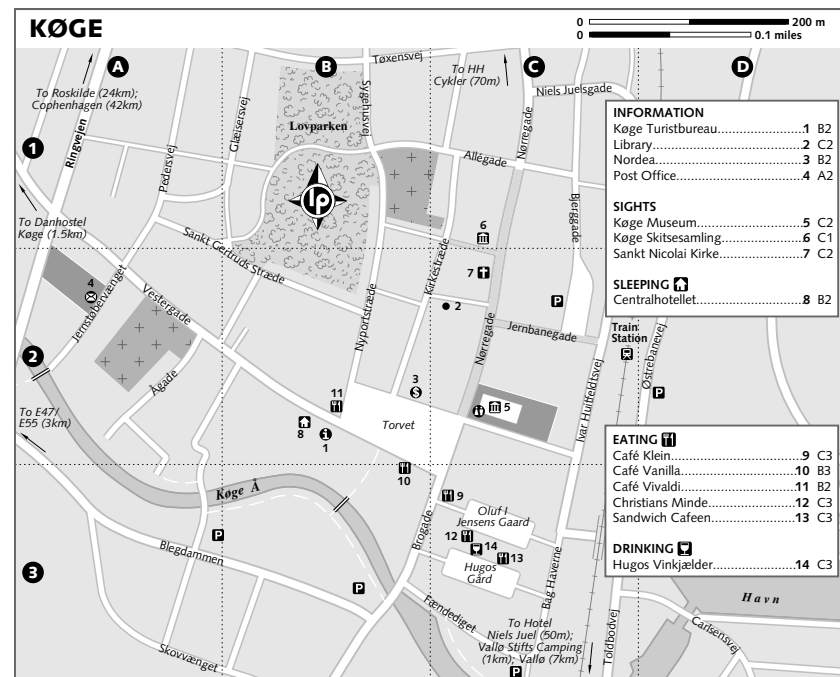
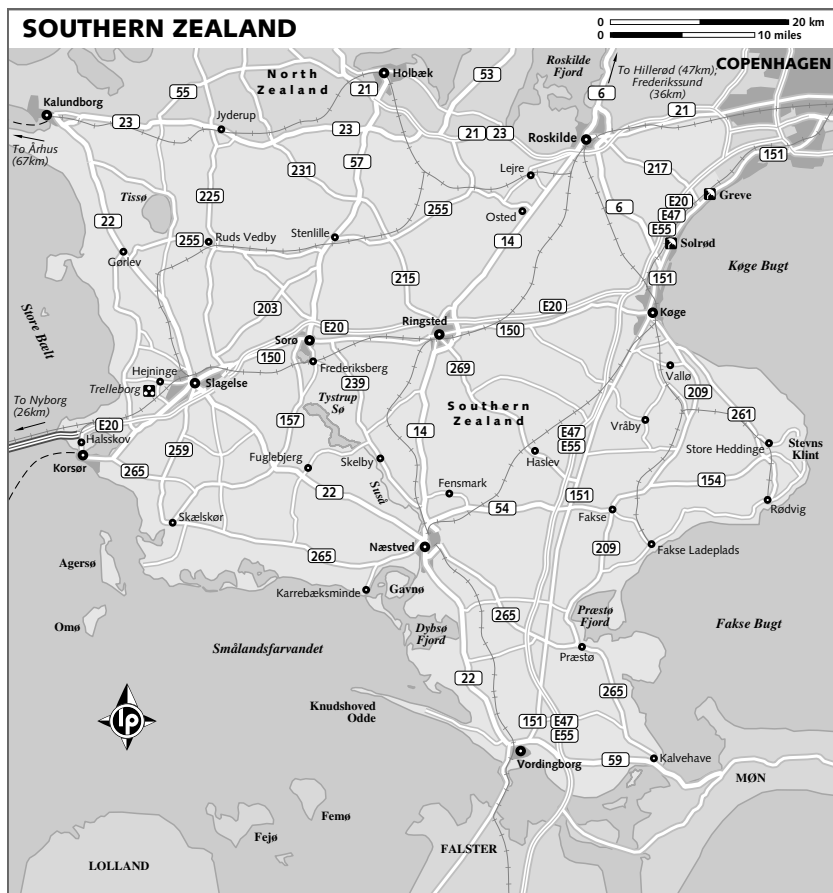
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The country's largest town square sits at the heart of Køge, creating an open, relaxed feel from the off. The main joy here is to wander

der the narrow cobbled streets containing Denmark's best-preserved 17th- and 18th-century buildings. Add in a decent array of independent shops and tempting restaurants, and your maximum walking speed will be a lazy amble.

Køge is also a thriving fishing and trade centre. There are narrow beaches along the bay to the north and south of town, although you'll need to ignore the somewhat industrial backdrop of the modern commercial harbour.

In 1677 a vital naval engagement was fought in the waters off Køge. Known as the Battle of Køge Bay, it made a legend of Danish admiral Niels Juel, who resoundingly defeated the attacking Swedish navy.



## Information

**Køge Turistbureau** (☎ 56 67 60 01; www.visitkøge.com; Vestergade 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, Sat 10am-1pm) **Library** (☎ 56 65 23 00; www.køgebib.dk; Kirkestræde 18; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon, 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat year-round, plus 10am-1pm Sun Oct-Mar) Free internet access.

**Nordea** (☎ 56 63 33 33; Torvet 14; ☎ 9.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Thu) Bank with ATMs.

**Post office** (☎ 70 12 40 00; Jernstøberværnet 2; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat)

## Sights

### SANKT NICOLAI KIRKE

Named after the patron saint of mariners, the **Sankt Nicolai Kirke** (☎ 56 65 13 59; Kirkestræde 31; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri & noon-4pm Sun Jul-mid-Aug, 10am-noon Mon-Fri mid-Aug-Jun) is two blocks north of Torvet.

On the upper eastern end of the church tower there's a little brick projection called **Lygten**, which was used to hang a burning lantern as a guide for sailors returning to the harbour. It was from the top of the church tower that Christian IV kept watch on his naval fleet as it successfully defended the town

from Swedish invaders during the Battle of Køge Bay.

From July to early August, you can climb the 14th-century **tower** (admission 10kr; ☎ noon-4pm Mon-Fri), the oldest part of the church. Inside, features worth noting include the ornate 17th-century altar and pulpit, and the carved wooden gallery that raised Køge's nobility above the rabble.

## KØGE MUSEUM

Once a merchant's home, **Køge Museum** (☎ 56 63 42 42; www.dmol.dk; Norregade 4; adult/student/child incl entry to Køge Skitsesamling 30/15kr/free; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, 1-5pm Tue-Fri & Sun, 11am-3pm Sat Sep-May) occupies a lovely half-timbered building dating from 1619.

As well as the expected furnishings, local-history artefacts, and a large textile collection, there are two significant exhibits. One is the Strobj Egede grave from 4000 BC, containing the skeletons of eight children and adults – the only mass grave from that era to be found in Europe. The other is Denmark's biggest coin-board, a shining pile of 17th-century silver unearthed in the courtyard at Brogade 17 by

two electricians. The 32kg pile is thought to have been stashed away during the Danish-Swedish wars.

In Hans Christian Andersen's day, a local inn was supposed to have had the words 'God, Oh God in Kjøge' scratched onto a window-pane. Failing to find the inscription, Andersen vandalised a window himself – writing smugly in his diary 'I wrote it, and now it is very legible'. The museum has the glass on show.

### KØGE SKITSESAMLING

**Køge Skitsesamling** (☎ 56 67 60 20; www.skitsesamlingen.dk; Nørregade 29; adult/18-24 yr/under 18 incl entry to the Køge Museum 30/15kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) is a unique art museum that displays not the artist's finished work, but the notes and scribbles, sketches, models and mock-ups that built up into the final piece. It's fascinating, particularly for non-artists, to see the creative process deconstructed.

### BEACHES & HARBOUR

Early risers can watch the fishermen unload herring and eels at the working harbour. The yacht harbour lies 2km to the north, and there are two beaches, lying north and south of the industrial harbour.

The large inlet Køge Bay, which looks as though someone has taken a huge bite out of Zealand's east coast, is well-known for the beaches at Solrød and Greve, 8km and 17km north of Køge respectively. They're a popular escape for the city-dwellers of Copenhagen, just a short ride away on the S-train.

### Walking Tour

Køge's finest historical sites are within easy walking distance of each other. A pleasant meander round town can be done in about an hour, although if you stop at Sankt Nicolai Kirke and the two museums, you could turn it into a half-day outing.

Begin the walk from Torvet by making a short detour west along the first block of **Vestergade**. There are two half-timbered houses on this street: **No 7 (1)**, which dates from the 16th century, and **No 16 (2)**, a remarkably well-preserved merchant's house dating from 1644, featuring old hand-blown glass in the doors and intricately carved detail on the timbers. From Vestergade, return to Torvet and head north on Kirkestræde.

At **Kirkestræde 3 (3)**, just near Torvet, is the house built by Oluf Sandersen and his

wife Margareta Jørgensdatter in 1638, the date recorded in the lettering above the gate. Half-timbered **Kirkestræde 13 (4)** dates from the 16th century – look out for its twisting chimney pot, an advert to passers-by seeking a blacksmith. Another 17th-century house at **Kirkestræde 10 (5)** now serves as a kindergarten.

**Kirkestræde 20 (6)** is the oldest half-timbered house in Denmark, constructed in 1527. It's a mere 4m by 5m in size – amazing to think that in the late 19th century, a tanner lived here with his wife and 10 kids! These days it contains perhaps the cutest children's library on earth. Just to the north is **Sankt Nicolai Kirke (7, p139)**.

If you turn right onto Katekismusgade, you'll immediately come to the art museum **Køge Skitsesamling (8)**. In the grounds near the museum is a bronze sculpture by Svend Rath-sack of a young boy with scurrying lizards.

Immediately north, at Nørregade 31, is an attractive red timbered house built in 1612 that now holds a **goldsmith shop (9)**. Continuing south on Nørregade, you'll pass more houses built in the early 17th century: No 5, which

now houses the **Arnold Busck bookshop (10)**, and No 4, home to the **Køge Museum (11)**.

Look for the marble plaque marked **Kiøge Huskors (12)** (Kiøge and Kjøge are old spellings of Køge) on the green corner building at Torvet 2. It honours the victims of a witch-hunt in the 17th century, when 16 people were burned at the stake, including two residents of an earlier house on this site.

Along the eastern side of Torvet is the yellow neoclassical **Køge Rådhus (13)**, said to be the oldest functioning town hall in Denmark. At the back is a building erected in 1600 to serve as an inn for King Christian IV, when he travelled from his Copenhagen palace to visit his mum at Nykøbing Slot.

At Brogade 1, by the southeastern corner of Torvet, is **Køge Apotek (14)**, a pharmacy that has occupied this site since 1660. Proceeding south, at Brogade 7 is **Oluf I Jensens Gård (15)**, a courtyard lined with a collection of typical 19th-century merchant buildings; one of these now houses **Køge Galleriet (16)**, a local art gallery.

An older courtyard, **Hugos Gård (17)**, is nearby at Brogade 19. The wine bar Hugos Vinkjælder contains a medieval brick-built cellar, dating all the way back to 1300. Stop for a beer and refresh your legs.

In the adjacent courtyard, at **Brogade 17 (18)**, workers unearthed a buried treasure in 1987 – an old wooden trunk filled with over 2000 17th-century silver coins, the largest coin-hoard ever found in Denmark. Some are on display at the Køge Museum.

Cherubs carved by the famed 17th-century artist Abel Schrøder decorate the building (c 1638) at **Brogade 23 (19)**. If you cross the street and return to Torvet along the western side of Brogade, you'll pass Køge's longest timber-framed house at **Brogade 16 (20)**, a yellow-brick structure erected in 1636 by the town's mayor.

### Sleeping

The tourist office can book rooms in private homes for 400kr to 500kr per double; there's no booking fee.

**Vallø Stifts Camping** (☎ 56 65 28 51; www.valloecamping.dk; Strandvejen 102; camp site per person 65kr; ☎ Apr-Sep; ☎) Technically part of Vallø, but actually only 1km from Køge centre, this lovely, leafy camping ground is inside a sea-side nature reserve. It's great for families with young children – there are goats, minigolf,

table tennis, pétanque and four playgrounds on site, a large swimming-pool nearby, and a child-friendly beach just across the road. Free wi-fi.

**Danhostel Køge** (☎ 56 65 14 74; www.danhostel.dk/koege; Vamdrupvej 1; dm/r from 140/300kr; ☎ Apr-mid-Dec; ☎) In a quiet area 2km northwest of town, this friendly 120-bed hostel has small but cosy rooms, all with alarm clocks; those upstairs have velux windows with nice sky views. More expensive rooms are available with private bathrooms. There's a laundry, small playground, and organic breakfast buffet (45kr). Bus 121 and 210 will get you halfway there.

**Centralhotellet** (☎ 56 65 06 96; fax 56 66 02 07; Vestergade 3; s/d incl breakfast without bathroom 330/620kr, d with bathroom 720kr; ☎) The aptly named Centralhotellet is adjacent to the tourist office. It has a dozen very straightforward rooms (plain décor, no TV or phone etc) above a small bar and in a separate wing at the back. Three of the doubles have private bathrooms.

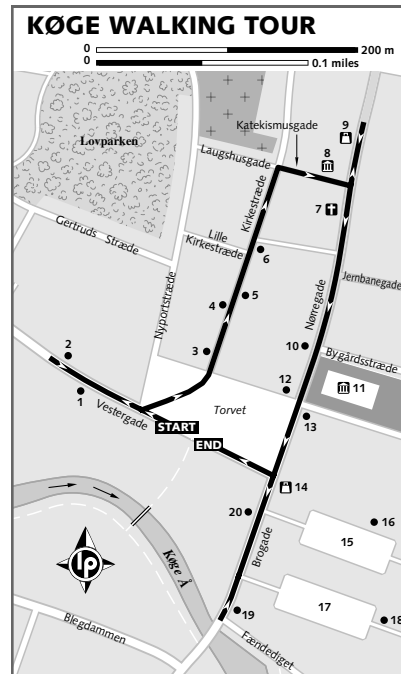
**Hotel Niels Juel** (☎ 56 63 18 00; www.hotelnielsjuel.dk; Toldbodvej 20; s/d incl breakfast 1050/1250kr; ☎) This 50-room modern hotel and restaurant nevertheless looks distinctive and old-fashioned in a charming way. Rooms have all the expected facilities, including phone, minibar and satellite TV, and have apparently been decorated with Feng-Shui principles in mind! Niels Juel overlooks the harbour a couple of blocks south of the train station.

### Eating

**Sandwich Cafeen** (☎ 56 65 04 28; Brogade 19; sandwiches from 40kr; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Situated in Hugo's Gård, this little shop probably sells the cheapest sandwiches in town. Take them away, or eat at one of the few small tables in the courtyard.

**Café Klein** (☎ 56 63 60 61; Brogade 7; light meals 50-60kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) Klein serves up omelettes, pasta salads and burgers in a fraying-at-the-edges interior, although there's some nice shady seating in the historic courtyard out back. It tends to fill up after school with chain-smoking teens.

**Christians Minde** (☎ 56 63 68 56; Brogade 7; light lunches 60kr, dinner mains 140-200kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) The menu features an interesting mix of traditional Danish meals, Chinese staples and big American-style steaks. The dining room is elegant and slightly formal, with more casual



seating outside in the cheery yellow courtyard. Live music every Saturday.

**Café Vanilla** (☎ 56 65 01 75; Torvet 17; lunch mains 65-80kr, dinner mains 80-180kr; ☺ lunch & dinner) A more upmarket choice, Café Vanilla is a very popular lunch spot – it's not very big, and you'll probably have to wait for a table. Despite the crush of people, it feels spacious thanks to its large mirrors and a raised area at the back. Huge plates of salads, sandwiches and omelettes swamp the lunchtime tables, while in the evening a more sophisticated menu of pasta dishes and meat mains emerges.

**Café Vivaldi** (☎ 56 63 53 66; www.cafevivaldi.dk; Torvet 30; lunch mains 65-80kr, dinner mains 110-160kr; ☺ lunch & dinner) The other bistro-style café on Torvet is also a top bet; it has lots of seating, so if you can't bear to queue, head here. It's a young, lively place, with squashy leather seating and similar food to Vanilla – the lunch menu is identical, while evening offers a varied choice from salmon fillets and steaks to burritos. Order at the counter. At weekends, it becomes a busy bar with live music.

There's a produce, cheese and flower market at Torvet on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

### Drinking

**Hugos Vinkjælder** (☎ 56 65 58 50; Brogade 19; ☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Hugos is a fantastic place, a dark and cosy little wine bar, curled up in a 14th-century cellar. The wine list is good, but it's the choice of 150 beers from around the world that really gives a rush of pleasure. It includes beers from several Danish microbreweries, including local outfit Bryghuset Braunstein. In summer, live jazz bands play in the courtyard at noon on Saturday.

### Getting There & Away

Køge is the southernmost station on greater Copenhagen's S-train network, at the end of the E and A+ lines. Trains from Copenhagen (66.50kr, 32 minutes) run three to six times an hour. Køge is also on the train line between Roskilde (38kr, 25 minutes) and Næstved (51kr, 45 minutes), with trains running to both towns approximately every half hour.

**Bornholmstrafikken** (☎ 56 95 18 66; www.bornholmstrafikken.dk) runs ferries between Køge and Rønne, on the Swedish island of Bornholm. Ferries leave at 11.30pm daily year-round from both ports, with extra services between

July and early August. The trip takes 6½ hours, and a single fare costs 244/260/122kr per adult/adult cyclist/12-15 year-old. A car including five people costs 1350kr. For further details see p331.

Køge is 42km southwest of Copenhagen and 23km southeast of Roskilde. If you're coming by road take the E47/E55 from Copenhagen or Rte 6 from Roskilde and then pick up Rte 151 south into the centre of Køge.

### Getting Around

You can hire bikes from **HH Cykler** (☎ 56 65 06 10; Nørre Blvd 59; ☺ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-12.30pm Sat) for 75kr per 24 hours, plus a 400kr deposit.

Car-drivers can park in Torvet, but only for an hour; turn down Brogade, then follow Fændediget round for less-restricted free parking off Bag Haverne and north of the harbour.

### VALLØ

Tiny Vallø is a fairy-tale hamlet with cobblestone streets, a dozen mustard-yellow houses and an attractive moat-encircled Renaissance castle, Vallø Slot. Situated in the countryside about 7km south of Køge, Vallø makes an enjoyable little excursion for those looking to get off the beaten path.

### Sights

Red-brick **Vallø Slot** ticks all the 'proper castle' boxes, with pointy turrets and a moat filled with lily pads and croaking frogs. Also like a proper castle, it's not open to riffraff, ie the public. But you *can* walk in the beautiful woods and **gardens** (☺ 8am-sunset) that extend from the castle building all the way to the sea. The castle stables, **Hestestalden** (☎ 56 63 42 42; admission free; ☺ 11am-4pm Tue-Sun mid-May-Aug) feature a small exhibition about the castle.

Vallø Slot has a rather unusual history. On her birthday in 1737 Queen Sophie Magdalene, who owned the estate, established a foundation that turned the castle into a home for 'spinsters of noble birth'. Unmarried daughters of Danish royalty unable to live in their own castles were allowed to live at Vallø, supported by the foundation and government social programmes. In the 1970s, bowing to changing public sentiments, the foundation amended its charter and declined to accept new residents. For now, the castle remains home solely to a handful of ageing blue-blooded women who took up residence before 1976.

The castle retains its original 16th-century style, although much of it was rebuilt following a fire in 1893.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Vallø Slotskro** (☎ 56 26 70 20; www.valloeslotskro.dk in Danish; Slotsgade 1; s/d incl breakfast without bathroom 475/750kr, with bathroom 745/945kr; mains 190kr; ☺ ☎) Just outside the castle gate, this 200-year-old inn has 11 small but pleasantly decorated rooms that combine antique furnishings with modern conveniences such as minibars and TVs. The inn's rich, red, old-fashioned dining room serves hearty, meaty Danish country fare (guinea fowl, steaks, veal) made using seasonal ingredients.

### Getting There & Away

Take the train to Vallø station, two stops south of Køge, and from there it's an easy 1.25km stroll east down a tree-lined country road to the castle.

If you're travelling by road take Rte 209 south from Køge, turn right onto Billesborgvej and then left (south) onto Valløvej, which leads to Slotsgade.

There's a signposted cycle route from Køge that leads into Valløvej.

### RINGSTED'S ROYAL CHURCH

Ringsted is mostly a modern town, with a bustling shopping centre but little in the way of tourist attractions. However, if you're passing through, it's worth stopping at the imposing **Sankt Bendts Kirke** (☎ 57 61 40 19; Sankt Bendtsgade 1; admission free; ☺ 10am-noon & 1-5pm May-mid-Sep, 1-3pm mid-Sep-Apr), Scandinavia's oldest brick church. It was built in 1170 by Valdemar I, partly as a burial sanctuary for his father, Knud Lavard, and partly as a political act, to intertwine the influences of the Valdemar family and the Catholic Church.

Sankt Bendts' most interesting features are its magnificent 14th-century **frescoes**. These include a series depicting Erik IV (1216-50), whose short and turbulent reign saw him warring against his own family and the local peasantry, before he was assassinated on the orders of his brother Abel. The frescoes of Erik (known as 'Ploughpenny' for the despised tax he levied on ploughs) were painted in a doomed campaign to get the dead king canonised. They show Queen Agnes seated on a throne; on her left Ploughpenny's murderers stab the king with a spear, while on the right the king's corpse is retrieved from the sea by fishermen.

The church was a **royal burial place** for 150 years: flat stones in the aisle floor beneath the nave mark the graves of Denmark's early royals. An interesting find came from one of these tombs. Queen Dagmar (1186-1213), the first wife of Valdemar II, was a Bohemian princess revered by the Danes. In 1683, her tomb was opened and a small gold cross with finely detailed enamel work was discovered. Now known as the **Dagmar Cross**, it is thought to date from AD 1000. One side shows Christ with arms outstretched on the cross and the other side depicts him with the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, St John and St Basil. The Byzantine-styled cross is now in Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, with a replica on display in Sankt Bendts Kirke. Copies are traditionally worn by brides who marry in the church.

Note that the church is closed whenever there are weddings, a particularly common occurrence on Saturdays in April and May.

### SORØ

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Thick with old timber-framed houses and bordered by lakes and woodlands, Sorø is an attractive historical town. It owes its existence to Sorø Akademi, an elite school for noblemen's sons established by Christian IV. The academy remains a prestigious school to this day; its grounds and lakeside park are open to the public, and make for an idyllic late afternoon stroll. **Søgade** is the most inviting street, composed of leaning half-timbered, mustard-yellow houses with red tiled roofs.

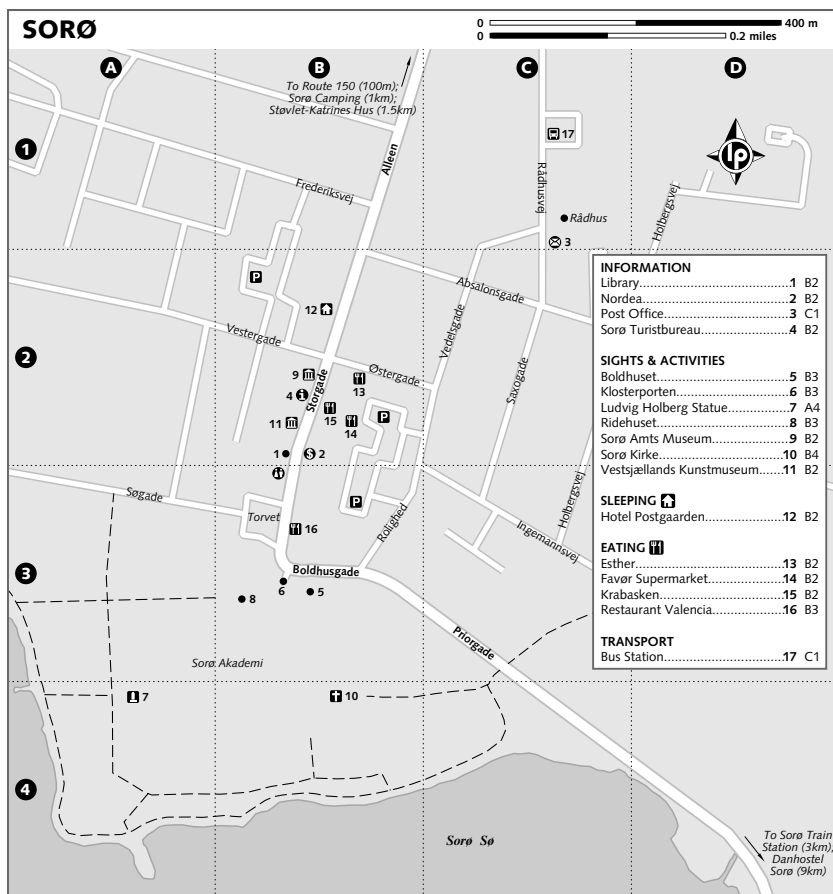
During Denmark's 'Golden Age' (1800-50) of national romanticism, Sorø became a haunt for some of the country's most prominent cultural figures, including Bertel Thorvaldsen, NFS Grundtvig and Adam Oehlenschläger.

### Information

**Library** (☎ 57 87 01 01; Storgade 7; ☺ 2-7pm Mon, 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Free internet access.

**Nordea** (☎ 57 83 05 00; Storgade 22) One of several banks in town.

**Post office** (☎ 58 56 78 00; Rådhusvej 6; ☺ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat)



**Sorø Turistbureau** (☎ 57 82 10 12; www.soroeturisme.dk in Danish; Storgade 15; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat, 1-4pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri & 9.30am-noon Sat mid-Aug-mid-Jun) In addition to the usual services, staff here can arrange bicycle rentals.

## Sights & Activities

### SORØ KIRKE

Denmark's largest monastery church, and one of the country's oldest brick buildings, is the 12th-century **Sorø Kirke** (☎ 57 82 10 12; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun Apr-mid-Sep; reduced hr mid-Sep-Mar), in the centre of the academy grounds. The Romanesque interior is simple and harmonious, brightened by **medieval frescoes** of blue, red, orange, green and white geometric

patterns, shields and leaves, and lightened by a high 13th-century Gothic ceiling.

Bishop Absalon, a member of the influential Hvide family, was one of Denmark's most significant medieval statesmen. He established a Cistercian monastery in Sorø in 1161 and had this church built in the grounds to serve as a family mausoleum. Famous people who are buried here include its founder Bishop Absalon, interred in a prime position directly behind the main altar. In a display cabinet to the right of the altar are the ivory crosier, gold-and-sapphire ring and silver chalice with which he was buried (extracted from his tomb in the 19th century).

Keeping Absalon company are kings Valdemar IV, Christopher II and Oluf III. Queen Margrethe I, the architect of the 1397

Kalmar Union, was buried here as well, but her remains were later transferred to Roskilde Domkirke. At the end of the left aisle is the marble sarcophagus of the great comic poet and playwright Ludvig Holberg.

The church's grand interior includes a 6m-high 16th-century crucifix by Odense sculptor Claus Berg, carved from a single piece of wood, and a beautifully detailed Baroque altar and pulpit. The 16th-century **organ** is the centrepiece of the **Sorø International Music Festival** (www.soroe-musik.suite.dk in Danish), with classical concerts held on Wednesday evening from late June to early September; advance tickets (90kr) are available from the tourist office.

### SORØ AKADEMI

After the Reformation, Frederik II decreed that Sorø's monastery should be turned into a school. In 1623, his successor, Christian IV, developed it into the Sorø Academy of Knights, an elite establishment dedicated to the education of the sons of the nobility. Lessons included the art of hunting, behaviour and manners – skills fitting to a noble diplomat.

Today its intake is a little less exclusive, but **Sorø Akademi** remains a prominent Danish school. The extensive grounds are owned by a private foundation (though the school itself is state-funded), and visitors are welcome to amble through them.

The southern end of Sorø's main street, Storgade, leads directly to the academy via **Klosterporten**, a medieval gate that once cloistered the monks from the outside world.

Other medieval monastery buildings were replaced with Renaissance structures – thought to be more conducive to learning – in the 17th century. **Ridehuset**, immediately west of Klosterporten, was built by Christian IV to stable the horses and dogs used for hunting. **Boldhuset**, just east of Klosterporten, also dates from the reign of Christian IV and now houses the library.

A **statue** of the great Danish playwright Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), who rescued the school after a financial crisis forced it to close, can be found in the garden area in the western part of the grounds. Picturesque **walking trails** lead west from the statue down to Sorø Sø.

### MUSEUMS

Three hundred years of Danish art is on display at **Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum** (Art Museum of

West Zealand; ☎ 57 83 22 29; Storgade 9; adult/child 20kr/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun mid-May-mid-Aug, 1-4pm Tue-Sun mid-Aug-mid-May), housed in another quaint period building. Its varied collection runs the gamut from medieval woodcarvings to wildly expressionist modern art. The top floor is reserved for changing exhibitions.

The regional **Sorø Amts Museum** (☎ 57 83 40 63; Storgade 17; admission free; ☎ 1-4pm Tue-Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, Tue-Thu & Sun, 10am-1pm Sat mid-Aug-mid-Jun) is housed in a handsome half-timbered building dating from 1625. It contains rooms with period furnishings, from a peasant's quarters to the stylish living room of an aristocrat. There's also a grocery shop from 1880 and a room furnished with the personal belongings of the 19th-century poet BS Ingemann, who taught at Sorø Akademi. Most of the information is in Danish only.

### Sleeping

Tourist office staff keep a shelf of leaflets on B&B accommodation in private homes, with singles/doubles for around 225/350kr.

**Sorø Camping** (☎ 57 83 02 02; www.soroecamping.dk; Udbyhøjvej 10; camp site per person 69kr; ☎ Mar-Oct; ☎) Three-star Sorø camping ground has a bucolic setting, on the edge of Pedersborg Sø northwest of town, about 150m north of Slagelsevej. There's a shop and laundry, two brand-new family bathrooms, toilets accessible to people in wheelchairs, baby goats, lollipop-making sessions, minigolf and a 'bouncy pillow' to keep kids amused. A 1km-long lakeside trail winds its way into town, or take bus 234. There are bicycles for hire and wi-fi access.

**Danhostel Sorø** (☎ 57 84 92 00; www.kongskildefriluftsgaard.dk in Danish; Skælskørvej 34; r 465kr; ☎ Apr-Oct; ☎) This old lakeside watermill is set in a wonderful spot in the middle of a nature reserve, also known as Kongskilde Friluftsgård. On Rte 157, 9km southwest of town (take bus 83), it's a popular respite for hikers and cyclists – two national cycle routes, Nos 6 and 7, cross right at the inn. Hostel rooms (with washbasins) cost the same whether there's one occupant or four; they're fairly bog-standard and on the dim side, but with all this fresh air about, hopefully you won't spend much time indoors.

**Hotel Postgaarden** (☎ 57 83 22 22; www.hotelpostgaarden.dk in Danish; Storgade 25; s/d incl breakfast 725/925kr; ☎) An inn-style hotel with a 300-year history, Postgaarden is right in the middle of the

town centre. Its 23 rooms, most with private bathrooms, are peach-coloured comfortable rather than cutting-edge. Some face the main pedestrianised street, while others look onto a quiet courtyard. There's a restaurant, wireless internet, and a web-connected computer in the lobby.

### Eating

**Ristorante Valencia** (☎ 57 83 16 13; Storgade 6; sandwiches 50-70kr, dinner mains 70-200kr; ☺ lunch & dinner) This upmarket Italian bistro-restaurant makes a great lunch stop, with a smart white interior cooled by breezy fans, and a view onto Torvet. Open sandwiches are big and beautifully presented, and there are one or two veggie choices. In the evening, there's a good variety of French and Spanish meat and fish dishes.

**Krabasken** (☎ 57 83 06 60; Holberg Arkaden 1; pizzas around 55kr; ☺ 10am-10pm) When you're wandering the streets in search of coffee, you begin to realise that Sorø has a serious dearth of cafés. This place, in a tiny shopping arcade on the main street, is one of the few. It also does pizzas, pasta mains, burgers, salads and baked potatoes.

**Esther** (☎ 57 83 41 14; Østergade 3; lunch mains from 70kr, dinner from 140kr; ☺ lunch & dinner Jun-Aug) The owners of this former cinema have created a superb dining experience. Chandeliers dangle from loft-like ceilings, light pours through windows and the décor is creative and personal. The menu is small but the attention given to each dish is high, emphasising seasonal ingredients. There's a garden in the back and the owners can also give you Danish travel advice.

**Støvlet-Katrin's Hus** (☎ 57 83 50 80; Slagelsevej 63; 3-course meals 373kr; ☺ lunch & dinner) Originally built as a home for Christian VII's mistress, this atmospheric place is on the western edge of town. Today it's a grand gourmet restaurant, serving splendid French-influenced Danish dishes such as pheasant with red-cabbage-and-fig compote and bacon sauce, or salmon caught in the nearby lake and smoked on the premises. A wine selection matches each course.

There are several places to get cheap meals including a bakery and a take-away pizzeria on Storgade. You can buy groceries at the **Favorer supermarket** (Storgade 28).

### Getting There & Away

Sorø is 15km east of Slagelse and 16km west of Ringsted via Rte 150 or the E20.

Sorø train station is in Frederiksberg, 3km south of the town centre – buses 806 and 807 run from the central bus station to the train station at least hourly. Sorø is on the line between Copenhagen (78kr, 50 minutes) and Odense (144kr, 50 minutes), with trains running approximately hourly. Nearby towns on the same line include Slagelse (39kr, 10 minutes), Korsør (65kr, 20 minutes), Ringsted (39kr, 8 minutes) and Roskilde (43kr, 25 minutes).

There's a frequent bus service 234 between Sorø, and Ringsted (39kr, 22 minutes) and Slagelse (39kr, 25 minutes).

## SLAGELSE

pop 31,778

Slagelse is a handy base for trips to Trelleborg (opposite), the nearby Viking fortress, but there's little to keep you there. **Slagelse Tourist-bureau** (☎ 58 52 22 06; www.vikingelandet.dk; Løvegade 7; ☺ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri & 9am-3pm Sat mid-Jun-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-1pm Sat Sep-mid-Jun) is a short walk south of the train station and 300m west of Nytorv.

### Sleeping & Eating

Tourist office staff keep a list of rooms in private homes, costing around 225/350kr for singles/doubles.

**Danhostel Slagelse & Kommunes Campingplads** (☎ 58 52 25 28; www.danhostel.dk/slagelse; Bjergbygade 78; camp site per person 60kr, dm/s/d 125/310/410kr; ☺ camping ground mid-Apr-mid-Sep, hostel mid-Jan-mid-Dec; 📍) Slagelse hostel, 2km south of town, is rather unattractive – it looks like a two-storey office building. Standard rooms have two, four or six beds. The adjacent camping ground is a small, quiet hedged area with basic facilities. Bus 87 (towards Skælskør rutebilstation/bus station) runs nearest to the hostel.

**Hotel Frederik D II** (☎ 58 53 03 22; www.frederik2.dk; Idagårdsvej 3; s/d incl breakfast 925/1200kr; 📍) This large business hotel is near the intersection of Rte 22 and the E20 at the south side of town. Rooms, decorated in that disconcerting blue-and-orange colour scheme you only see in chain hotels, are comfortable and contain flat-screen TVs. There's a sauna and restaurant, and rates drop at weekends.

**Café Vivaldi** (☎ 58 53 29 09; Rosengade 6; sandwiches 50-70kr, dinner mains 90-130kr; ☺ lunch & dinner) This popular café-bar has red leather banquettes and a crowd of tables inside, and summery outdoor seating with prime views of the

Gothic Sankt Mikkel's Kirke. The decent international menu includes lunchtime salads, omelettes and sandwiches, with steaks and pasta dishes in the evening. There's live music at weekends.

### Getting There & Away

Slagelse is at the intersection of Rtes 150 and 22 and by the E20 motorway. It's 37km south-east of Kalundborg and 19km northeast of Korsør.

Slagelse is on the main east-west train line between Copenhagen and Odense, with an hourly train service to Korsør (39kr, eight minutes), Sorø (39kr, 10 minutes) and Roskilde (61kr, 34 minutes).

## TRELLEBORG

The best preserved of the four Viking ring fortresses in Denmark, **Trelleborg** (☎ 58 54 95 06; Trelleborg Allé 4; adult/under 18 55kr/free; ☺ 10am-5pm Sat-Thu Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Sat-Thu Sep-May) is 7km west of Slagelse. History buffs will revel in visiting one of the most important Viking Age sites, while others may just enjoy strolling the site, which is in a deeply peaceful countryside setting at the confluence of two gurgling streams.

### Sights MUSEUM

Before you head across the meadows to the fortress itself, visit the small but very informative **museum**, which explains how the fort was built, occupied and abandoned.

Display cases contain weapons belonging to soldiers at the fort (spearheads, axes, arrowheads and shield bosses), as well as everyday items (pottery, bronze jewellery, locks and keys, combs and loom weights). There are also two skeletons from the graveyard.

### THE FORTRESS

Trelleborg was constructed as a circular fortress, built to a precise mathematical plan (see the boxed text p148) and home to a garrison of around 500 soldiers, plus craftsmen and some women and children. Huge earthen banks, 17m wide and 6m high, formed a protective wall around the fort. Inside, two streets divided the circle into quarters, each containing four longhouses set around a courtyard. Two nearby streams gave the inhabitants boat access inland and out to the sea.

Trelleborg's impressive scale and strategic position, and the similarly designed forts at

Fyrkat, Nonnebakken and Aggersborg, indicate a powerful 10th-century force at work, with immense manpower to command. Dendrochronology has shown that the trees for the palisade (which added an extra defensive layer to the earth banks) were cut down in 980, during the reign of Harald Bluetooth. One theory is that the forts were built by Harald after an uprising led by his son, Svein Forkbeard.

Hints of big trouble are littered across Trelleborg. The fort was occupied for a very short space of time, before being abandoned around 990. There are signs of a large fire, and a **Viking graveyard** lying within the fort's outer defences contains two mass graves, both containing the bodies of men in their 20s and 30s.

Despite the passing of a millennium since its construction, the **circular earthen mound** is perfectly intact. Naturally, the wooden structures that once stood inside it have long since decayed, but the post-holes and gable ends of the buildings have been filled with cement to show the outlines of the house foundations. You can walk up onto the grassy circular rampart and readily grasp the strikingly precise geometric design of the fortress. Grazing sheep imbue the scene with a timeless aura.

### RECONSTRUCTIONS

Several Viking-era buildings have been reconstructed at the site, using authentic materials and methods. The most impressive is the **replica longhouse**, built in 1941 in Viking stave style. Sit quietly on one of the sleeping benches that line the walls, watching the swallows dart through the doorways and the smokehole, and you half expect one of the fortress's former inhabitants to wander in.

Since it was built, archaeologists have changed their opinion on the external appearance of the longhouse. They now think that there was no outer gallery and that the roof was much lower – still, 10 out of 10 for effort.

A few reconstructed houses are clustered together to form **'Trelletorp'**, a tiny Viking village, with bemocked interpreters doing chores of the period such as sharpening axes, chopping wood and baking bread. From June to August, there are often activities for children, such as archery demonstrations and pottery workshops.

### Getting There & Away

Bus 312 runs from Slagelse to Trelleborg (13kr, 11 minutes) on weekdays only. There

are around seven buses per day, with the first leaving Slagelse at 7am and the last (to arrive within the museum's opening hours) at 3pm. Or just take a taxi to the site, which costs about 120kr from Slagelse: two local taxi companies are **Slagelse Taxa** (☎ 58 53 53 53) and **Pouls Taxa og Minibus** (☎ 58 26 60 33).

Driving from Slagelse, take Strandvejen to its end at the village of Hejninge and then follow the signs to Trelleborg, 1km further on.

## KORSØR

pop 14,850

Korsør was once a booming ferry town, thanks to its location at the narrowest point of the Store Bælt (Great Belt), the stretch of water separating Zealand from Funen. In 1998 all that changed with the opening of an epic toll bridge and tunnel system, 3km north of town. Korsør itself is now largely bypassed by travellers. There are a couple of local sights, but if time is tight, Nyborg (p209), over the bridge, holds far more allure.

For more information go to **Korsør Turistbureau** (☎ 58 35 02 11; www.visitkorsor.dk; Nygade 7; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-2pm Sat Jun-Aug, plus 11am-2pm Sun Jul, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri & 10am-1pm Sat Sep-May).

The 18km-long **Storebælts-forbindelsen** (Great Belt Fixed Link) is composed of two bridges, an island and a tunnel that carry road and train traffic between Zealand and Funen. It's an amazing piece of design and worth going to admire. The highest points in

Denmark are the tops of the two 254m pylons on the East Bridge, which joins Zealand to Sprogø Island before carrying cars onwards over the West Bridge to Funen. The bridges look particularly stunning at night, as they glitter and twinkle in the darkness.

The **Fæstning** (Fortress), near the town centre on the southern side of the harbour, is one of Denmark's few remaining medieval towers. You can get the key from **Korsør By- og Overfartsmuseum** (Korsør Town & Ferry Service Museum; ☎ 58 37 47 55; Søbatteriet 3; adult/child 15/5kr; ☎ 11am-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep), which contains ship models and information on the ferries and icebreakers that have crossed the Store Bælt over the past two centuries.

Works by Harald Isenstein, a Jewish sculptor who fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s, are on display at the fine 18th-century house **Kongegården** (☎ 53 57 78 90; Algade 25; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm daily, to 8pm Wed), along with temporary exhibitions of regional paintings.

Korsør's new train station is 3km north of town, by the Storebælt link. It's on the main line between Zealand and Funen, with trains running roughly every hour to Copenhagen (108kr, one hour) and Odense (116kr, 28 minutes). Local buses connect Korsør town centre with the train station.

On the northern outskirts of Korsør, the E20 crosses the Storebælt channel to Nyborg on Funen. The one-way toll for the bridge is motorcycle/small car/large car 105/205/310kr. There are also some day-return (although not in high season) and weekend deals.

## TRELLEBORG'S PRECISE DESIGN

While Vikings aren't usually associated with scientific sophistication in the popular imagination, Trelleborg's military origins are visible in its precise mathematical layout and use of the Roman foot (29.33cm) as a unit of measurement.

The Trelleborg compound consists of two wards that encompass about 7 hectares in all. The inner ward is embraced by a circular earthen rampart 6m high and 17m thick at its base. Four gates, one at each point of the compass, cut through the rampart. The ward is crossed by two streets, one east-west, the other north-south, which divide it into four symmetrical quadrants. In Viking times, each quadrant contained four long elliptical buildings surrounding a courtyard. Each of the 16 buildings was exactly 100 Roman feet long and contained a central hall and two smaller rooms.

An 18m-wide ditch ran around the exterior of the inner rampart; two bridges spanned the ditch, crossing over to the outer ward. This outer ward contained a cemetery holding about 135 graves and 15 buildings, each of which was 90 Roman feet long and lined up radially with its gable pointing towards the inner rampart. The buildings lying in the outer ward have no fireplaces, and so possibly functioned as storehouses.

A second earthen rampart separated the outer ward from the surrounding countryside.

## LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH & VIKING

Denmark's richest Viking site is the 6th-century Viking manor house on the western shore of Lake Tissø, between Slagelse and Kalundborg.

The most famous find (so far) is a massive solid-gold necklace, weighing 1.8kg. It's now displayed in the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen, with a replica in Kalundborg museum. Over 10,000 items have been found since digs began in earnest in 1995, with the extent and high calibre of the finds causing real excitement. An abundance of Arabian and Nordic coins, beautifully cast silver brooches, animal-entwined bronze pendants, a golden hinge, a tuning-peg for a harp, and top-quality sword handles and stirrups, all dating from 500 to 1050 AD, are just some of the aristocratic treasures found.

The manor-house complex, four times the size of any other so far discovered, is thought to have been a royal estate, holiday home, hunting lodge, banquet house or cult centre (20 Thors' hammers have been found there), or possibly some combination of the above. The absence of any graves at the site leads archaeologists to believe that it wasn't a permanent dwelling-place.

Some experts think the site may have been the ancient seat of Viking kings. Artefacts from England, Ireland, Germany and Norway indicate that the manor house's visitors were heavily involved in military adventures and plundering – and therefore the elite of Viking society.

## KALUNDBORG

pop 16,250

Most people come to Kalundborg to catch ferries. The train line ends at the central harbour, so you can walk off the train and right onto a boat to Århus (Jutland).

If you have time before hopping on a boat, stroll over to Vor Frue Kirke, an intriguing medieval church and Kalundborg's pride and joy.

There's a small **tourist bureau** (☎ 59 51 09 15; www.kalundborg-turistbureau.dk; Volden 12; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-3pm Sat Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri & 10am-1pm Sat Sep-May) situated near the bottom end of Torvet.

## Sights

**Vor Frue Kirke** (Aldegade; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Jul & Aug, 9am-4pm Sep-Jun) is unique among Danish churches – a five-towered castle-church, designed according to the medieval vision of Jerusalem. Inside, the main item of note is the 17th-century altarpiece. The church was built in the early 13th century by Bishop Absalon's niece Ingeborg, originally as part of an extensive fortress. However, in 1658 the townspeople tore down the fortress walls to minimise the risk of an attack by Swedish forces. The church is just west of Torvet and a short walk northwest from the harbour.

Absalon's brother Esbern Snare had a castle in Kalundborg. The remains of it lie in **Ruinparken**, a few minutes further west, but there's little left to decipher among the grassy

ruins, and lots of hidden snails that make for unpleasant crunching underfoot.

If you make a loop around Vor Frue Kirke via Præstegade and Adelgade, you'll pass through the oldest part of town, with several dinky cobbled streets lined with brightly coloured 16th-century houses. One of them houses the **Kalundborg-og Omegns Museum** (☎ 59 51 21 41; Adelgade 23; adult/under 18 30kr/free; ☎ 11am-5pm May-Aug, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Sep, Nov & Jan-Apr), the local-history museum. Among the large collection of room furnishings, tools, costumes, carriages, paintings etc, there are two male skeletons from the Viking era, found beheaded near Tissø (see the boxed text above): why they died is a matter for speculation, but the poor state of their teeth and bones show that they probably lived wretched lives at the bottom of society. There's also a toy cabinet containing an unusual take on boring old ships-in-bottles – Jesus in a bottle!

On Torvet is the **birthplace** of Sigrid Undset (1882-1949), who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1928 for her gripping masterpiece *Kristin Lavransdatter*.

## Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office can help you with private room bookings in the area, costing around 350/450kr per single/double.

**Danhostel Kalundborg** (☎ 59 56 13 66; www.fridage.dk; Stadion Allé 5; dm/r up to 4 people 180/475kr; ☎ year-round; (P) (Q)) Kalundborg's modern five-star hostel, just northwest of Ruinparken, is within

walking distance of the train station and the boats to Århus. All rooms have bathrooms, and there's good access for people in wheelchairs. You can also hire bikes here for 70kr per day.

**Restaurant Bispegården** (☎ 59 51 25 35; Adelgade 6; lunch mains 80kr, 2-course dinners 260kr; ☞ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Inside one of the super-quaint buildings on Adelgade – once the bishop's residence, no less – this old-fashioned restaurant near Vor Frue Kirke serves up fresh fish dishes. It has a pleasant courtyard garden, open in summer.

### Getting There & Away

Train services between Copenhagen and Kalundborg (108kr, 1¾ hours) operate at least hourly.

For road travellers, Kalundborg is at the terminus of Rtes 22 and 23, some 51km north of Korsør and 69km west of Roskilde.

**Mols-Linien** (☎ 70 10 14 18; www.mols-linien.dk) runs ferries from Kalundborg to Århus five to six times daily Monday to Friday, two to three times daily at the weekend. The trip takes 2¾ hours. The fare is 350kr per car with up to five people, and 225kr per motorcycle and up to two people.

### NÆSTVED & AROUND

pop 41,158

Drivers' hearts may sink as they enter Næstved, the largest settlement in the region, which at first glance appears to be nothing more than a mess of ring roads, slip roads and junctions. However, if you ditch the car and persevere to the pedestrianised heart, you'll discover a lively town dotted with medieval buildings (including two Gothic churches).

Næstved makes a convenient base from which to buzz in on some of Denmark's top family-oriented tourist attractions, all within a 10km radius – BonBon-Land theme park, the glassworks Holmegaard Glasværker and Næstved Zoo. More sedate types can explore the lakes and forests to the south and west, or join the happy throngs at seaside Karrebæksminde.

### Orientation

The bus and train stations are close together on Farimagsvvej, opposite its intersection with Jernbanegade. To get to Axeltorv, the central square, take Jernbanegade west to Sankt Mortens Kirke and then continue west on

Torvestræde; it's a walk of about five minutes in all. All the town's sights are within a few minutes' walk of Axeltorv.

### Information

**Danske Bank** (☎ 45 12 02 60; Hjultorv 18) One of several in the town centre.

**Næstved Hovedbibliotek** (☎ 55 88 40 00; Kvægtorvet 4-6; ☞ 10am-7pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) The central library, above the Kviklyk supermarket, has free internet access.

**Næstved Turistbureau** (☎ 55 72 11 22; www.visit-naestved.com; Det Gule Pakhus, Havnen 1; ☞ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri & 9am-2pm Sat mid-Jun–Aug, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri & 9am-noon Sat Sep–mid-Jun) Helpful staff.

**Post office** (☎ 55 78 75 00; ☞ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) By the train station.

### Sights in Næstved

#### SANKT PEDERS KIRKE

The large high-Gothic **Sankt Peders Kirke** (☎ 55 72 31 90; Sct Peders Kirkeplads; admission free; ☞ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri Jun–mid-Sep, 10am-noon Mon-Fri mid-Sep–May) features some notable 14th-century frescoes. One depicts machiavellian King Valdemar IV and his queen Helvig kneeling before God. The Latin inscription to the left of the king translates as 'In 1375, the day before the feast of St Crispin, King Valdemar died, do not forget it'.

#### SANKT MORTENS KIRKE

Also built in brick, the smaller **Sankt Mortens Kirke** (☎ 55 73 57 39; Kattebjerg 2; admission free; ☞ 9am-11am & 2-5pm Tue-Fri Jul & Aug, 9am-11am Tue-Fri Sep-Jun) has a strikingly similar design to Sankt Peders Kirke, and is decorated inside with period frescoes. You can see examples from a renowned 17th-century family woodcarving workshop here – a pulpit, carved by Schröder senior; and the fabulously detailed 6m-high altar by his son, master craftsman Abel, covered in characteristic grimacing masks and stooping, moustached figures.

#### NÆSTVED MUSEUM

**Næstved Museum** (☎ 55 77 08 11; www.naestved-museum.dk; Sct Peders Kirkeplads; admission free; ☞ 10am-2pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, 10am-2pm Mon-Thu Sep-Jun) is split over two buildings, in different parts of town.

Næstved's oldest building, the 14th-century **Helligåndshuset** (House of the Holy Ghost; Ringstedgade 4), was built as a religiously-run hospital/orphanage/old people's home. Today it contains the museum's local history section. There's a roomful of finds from a Viking-Age site at

Vester Egesborg (10km south of Næstved), as well as 13th- and 14th-century church carvings, exhibits on farming, trade and peasant life, some nicely presented old toys, and a section on the military in Næstved. Most of the information is in Danish, but the helpful museum staff will explain anything you can't translate.

**Boderne** (Sct Peders Kirkeplads), once a row of up-market medieval flats, now displays ceramics and glass from two big craft workshops in the area: Kählers Keramiske Værksted and Holmegaards Glasværk.

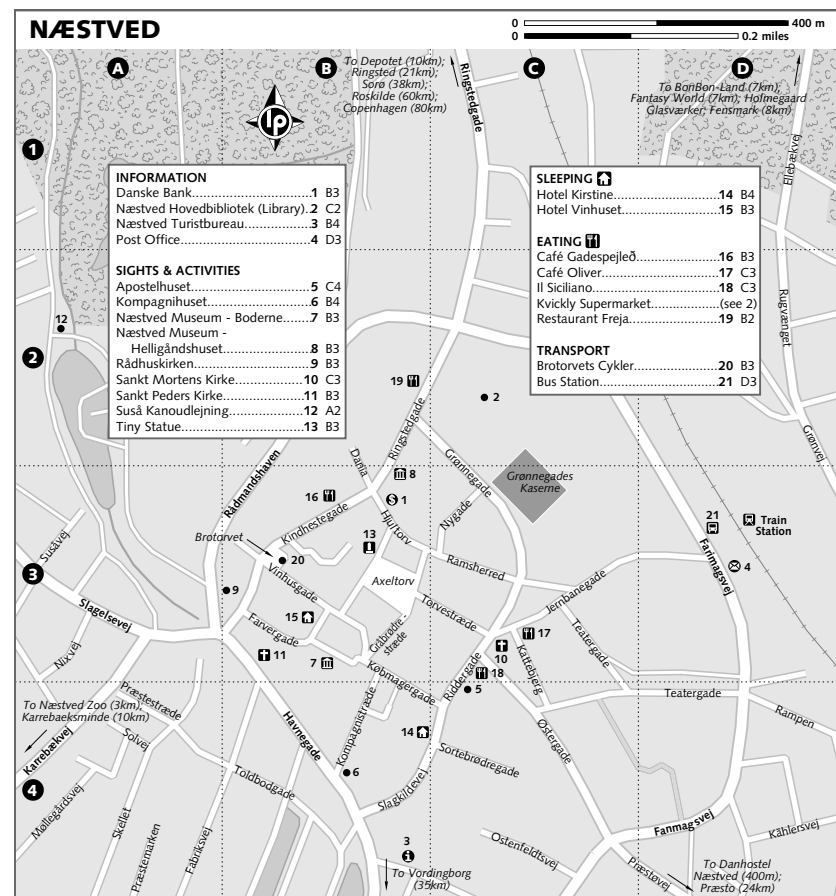
### INTERESTING BUILDINGS & MONUMENTS

The most stand-out medieval house is **Apostelhuset** (Riddergade 5), which takes its name from 13 exterior wooden braces separating the win-

dows. Christ stands on the central brace, with six apostles on either side, each clutching their associated symbols or instruments of torture, and standing on the head of a gruesome monster. Dating from about 1510, they're among the oldest and best-preserved timber-frame carvings in Denmark.

The country's only remaining medieval guildhall, **Kompagnihuset** (Kompagnistræde), is a timber-framed building constructed in 1493. It gets its name from a later use – Christian IV gave it to a Spanish trading company to use as their headquarters.

Also with roots in the medieval period is the old town hall, **Rådhuskirken**, the brick and half-timbered building at the northern side of Sankt Peders Kirke.





The town's most novel curiosity is Denmark's smallest equestrian **statue** (Hjultorv). The tiny bronze, depicting Næstved's founder Peder Bodilsen, is only 42cm high and sits on top of a tall brick pedestal.

## Sights around Næstved

### BONBON-LAND

One of Denmark's top five tourist attractions is the theme park **BonBon-Land** (☎ 55 53 07 00; www.bonbonland.dk; Gartnervej 2, Holme Olstrup; admission high/low season 179/159kr; ☎ 9.30am-8pm Jul-mid-Aug, 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri & 9.30am-8pm Sat & Sun May-Jun & late Aug, 9.30am-5pm Sat & Sun Sep-mid-Oct). Its biggest ride is the bonkers-looking Wild Boar rollercoaster, which sets off vertically before plunging into freefall, then looping-the-loop at speeds of up to 74km per hour. The other 60 or so amusements and rides are tamer, but your kids will love you for taking them there...especially when they hear about the sweets that shot the BonBon confectionary company to success – Dog Farts, Big Boobs and Seagull Plop.

BonBon-Land is about 7km east of Næstved; follow road 54, signposted to Rønnede. Trains to Holme Olstrup (26kr, 15 minutes) run roughly hourly; the theme park is a 10-minute walk from the station.

### FANTASY WORLD

Right next door to BonBon-Land, the brand-new attraction **Fantasy World** (☎ 55 53 07 77; www.fantasyworld.dk; Gartnervej 4, Holme-Olstrup; admission high/low season 119kr/99kr, children under 90cm tall free; ☎ 10am-4pm Jul-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm Thu, Sat & Sun mid-Aug-Dec & mid-Feb-Jun) is aimed at younger children. There's a little railway train to ride, Father Christmas's workshop, and tableaux from fairy tales and exotic countries, populated by over 1000 jiggling, talking, singing animatronic people and animals.

### HOLMEGAARD GLASVÆRKER

Anyone hypnotised by melting toffee-like glass can indulge at **Holmegaard Glasværker** (☎ 55 54 50 00; www.holmegaard.com; Glasværksvej 54; adult/4-11yr 89/69kr; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm mid-Aug-mid-Dec & Apr-Jun, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri Jan-Mar), Denmark's principal glassworks. The company has turned the factory into a 'visitor experience' by adding attendant attractions – you can watch sweets and chocolates being made, sample beer from the on-site microbrewery, visit the Holmegaard shop, or try your hand at glass-engraving (59kr) and glass-blowing (129kr). There's little

in life more satisfying than producing your own lopsided masterpiece, but be warned: the glass takes two hours to cool, and the glass-blowing area closes two hours before main closing times, so it's a morning activity only. Access for people in wheelchairs is very good.

Holmegaard is at Fensmark, about 8km northeast of Næstved. Take road 54 out of town, following signs to Rønnede/Fensmark; the glassworks is well signposted. Bus 75 (26kr, 20 minutes) from Næstved goes as far as Fensmark, from where Homegaard Glasværker is a 500m walk.

### NÆSTVED ZOO

Denmark's newest zoo is **Næstved Zoo** (☎ 55 77 44 04; www.naestvedzoo.com in Danish; Ålestopvej 2; adult/3-11yr 95/55kr; ☎ 10am-5pm Jul-Sep, 10am-2pm Oct-Jun), opened in July 2007. Of course it's strongly involved in breeding programmes and conservation work; but people really come to look at the great white tiger, the zoo's showpiece. Southwest of Næstved, off the Karrebæksminde road.

### KARREBÆKSMINDE

Karrebæksminde, 10km southwest of Næstved, is the beach resort where stressed-out town-dwellers go to unwind. It's a pretty self-contained place, with harbours, hotels, camping grounds, restaurants, supermarkets, and its own seasonal tourist office. Bus 979 runs there from Næstved.

### Activities

The calm waters of the Suså River make for good canoeing – you can paddle upstream through tranquil greenery for several days. **Suså Kanoudejlning** (☎ 57 64 61 44; www.kanoudejlning.dk in Danish; Slusehuset, Næsbyholm Allé 6) is a canoe-hire company tucked away in the large park just north of the centre. In July and early August, you can rent canoes for 100/180/260kr per one/two/three hours, or 370/660/830kr per one/two/three days. At other times, phone their office for assistance. Make your booking at least a day in advance; and bring cash, as the company doesn't have credit card facilities.

There's a hostel for canoeists in Skelby, halfway between Næstved and Sorø, see below for details.

### Sleeping

The tourist office maintains a list of private rooms available for rent in the greater

Næstved area, with singles from 175kr, doubles from 300kr.

**Danhostel Næstved** (☎ 55 72 20 91; www.danhostelnaestved.dk; Præstøvej 65; dm/s/d without bathroom 120/300/325kr, with bathroom 150/400/425kr; ☎ Feb-Nov; ☎ ) This hostel is based in a red-brick 1970s' nunnery. You'll find modern rooms here, most with private bathrooms, plus a laundry, small playground and internet access. The hostel is 1km from the town centre: head south from the train station and then continue east along Præstøvej.

**Depotet** (☎ 26 20 97 19; www.depotet-susaa.dk; Buen 18, Skelby; per person 150kr; ☎ May-mid-Sep; ☎ ) Almost halfway between Næstved and Sorø this is a cheerful, homely little hostel set up for passing canoeists. It has a dock, cosy rooms, a warm and inviting lounge, laundry and guest kitchen.

**Hotel Kirstine** (☎ 55 77 47 00; www.hotelkirstine.dk; Kobmagergade 20; s/d incl breakfast 775/945kr; ☎ ) The most charming place to stay is this romantic little hotel in the heart of Næstved. Crooked, cosy rooms have wooden floorboards and old furniture, plus cable TV, wireless internet, minibar etc. There's a restaurant and several snug lounge areas downstairs. Breakfast and coffee are served in a delightful plant-filled, sun-drenched arcade.

**Hotel Vinhuset** (☎ 55 72 08 07; www.hotelvinhuset.dk; Sct Peders Kirkeplads 4; s/d incl breakfast 798/998kr; ☎ ) Another very pleasant hotel is the larger 18th-century Vinhuset. Its light, high-ceilinged rooms, decorated in plain blue, orange or red colour schemes and brightened by cinema posters, come complete with expected modern amenities. The hotel itself has a great little restaurant in the vaulted medieval cellar, and a prime location opposite Sankt Peders Kirke.

### Eating

**Café Oliver** (☎ 55 77 88 81; Jernbanegade 2; light lunches 50-70kr, dinner mains 170kr; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-9pm Sun) On the sunny side of the street, trendy Oliver is the coolest spot to hang in Næstved. Perfect-looking blond, sunglassesed people sit at the scattering of outdoor tables to enjoy coffee, a glass of wine, or lunchtime sandwiches, salads, chilli con carne, tortillas and vegetable lasagne. Evening mains change with the seasons, but include dishes such as pesto-stuffed chicken breast served with a lemony sauce.

**Restaurant Freja** (☎ 51 33 35 34; www.restaurantfreja.dk in Danish; Ringstedgade 17; lunch 55-95kr, dinner mains

200kr, 3-course dinner with wine 500kr; ☎ 11.30am-4pm Tue & Wed, 11.30am-10pm Thu-Sat) This upmarket little café, done out in oatmeal tones, smells like a delicious deli inside. Lunches include herring platters, meatballs, great sandwiches and salads (vegetarians can have them minus the ham, chicken etc) and homemade burgers. At weekends, there's a small evening choice of à la carte favourites, such as steak, veal medallions or fish-of-the-day.

**Café Gadespejleø** (☎ 55 72 24 40; Kindhestegade 4; sandwiches 65kr; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat Jun-Sep, 9am-6pm Mon-Wed & 9am-10pm Thu-Sat Oct-May) Gadespejleø is a cheerful café with a large, modern, open eating area, plus six tables on the pedestrianised street outside. It specialises in light lunches – tacos, brunch, and Italian sandwiches – and does good coffee.

**Il Siciliano** (☎ 55 75 12 31; Riddergade 1A; mains around 200kr; ☎ 4-11pm Tue-Sat) Weathered beams and dark brick walls lend a dim and cosy feel to this restaurant on one of Næstved's older streets. As you'd guess, this place specialises in Italian meals. There's a small rich, meat selection (eg steak with mushrooms and cognac), and a longer list containing all the spaghetti, penne, fettucine and penne you could wish for, including several veggie options.

### Getting There & Around

The road system around Næstved (25km south of Ringsted and 28km north of Vordingborg) is fairly unpleasant for Denmark, as Rtes 14, 22, 54 and 265 all meet here in a disorientating tangle. Abandon the car as soon as possible (the car park outside Kvickly supermarket is central).

Trains run about hourly from Copenhagen (88kr, one hour), Roskilde (51kr, 42 minutes) and Ringsted (34kr, 20 minutes). There are also regular services to Vordingborg (39kr, 20 minutes) and to Køge (51kr, 34 minutes).

You can hire bicycles from **Brotrørets Cykler** (☎ 55 77 24 80; Brotrøret 3; ☎ 7am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 7am-7pm Fri, 7am-2pm Sat) for 65/350 per day/week, plus a 100kr deposit.

### PRÆSTØ

#### pop 3863

Shilly-shallying by the shore is the main pleasure at Præsto, a fjord-side village with a sleepy 19th-century feel. It has a small centre dotted with antique shops and some handsome buildings that can make for a pleasant hour or so of wandering. The main activity is at the

yacht harbour, filled with Danish and German pleasure boats.

Præstø's bus station is in the village centre. The main commercial street, Algade, is on the southern side of the bus station, while the waterfront is to the north.

## Sights & Activities

On the eastern side of the town centre is **Præstø Kirke** (Klosterakken; admission free; ☎ varies), whose north nave dates from the 13th century. Before the Reformation it was an abbey church for monks of the order of St Anthony (Præstø means 'Priests' Island'). The detailed altarpiece in the south nave was created by master craftsman Abel Schrøder in 1657.

The stately 17th-century manor house **Nysø** lies 1km northwest of town. Baroness Christine Stampe, who owned Nysø in the mid-19th century, opened it as a retreat for Danish artists, including sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen who set up a studio here. The manor isn't open to the public but a building in the grounds contains **Thorvaldsen-samlingen** (☎ 53 79 93 93; Nysøvej 1; adult/child 20kr/free; ☎ 11am-5pm Sat & Sun May-Aug), a collection of Thorvaldsen's sketches, reliefs and sculptures.

There's a public **beach** good for children on the northeastern side of town.

## Sleeping

At the time of writing, there was only one private home offering accommodation on the edge of Præstø – the B&B **Kirsebærkroen** (☎ 55 99 39 55; www.kirsebaerkroen.dk; Kirsebærvej 1; s/d 360/450kr). Each room has a private bathroom and patio area, and several have kitchenettes.

**Præstø Camping** (☎ 40 85 19 96; www.praestocamp.dk; Spangen 2; camp site per person 60kr; ☎ Apr-Sep) In a leafy setting 300m south of the town centre, this simple one-star facility is a tranquil camping ground where everything from the pond to the shop seems to have been made in miniature. It has two boats for hire, from 500kr per day.

**Hotel Frederiksminde** (☎ 55 90 90 30; www.hotel-frederiksminde.dk; Klosterakken 8; s/d 795/995kr) You couldn't ask for a better location for this delightfully romantic hotel – on top of a seaside knoll, at the end of a cobbled street planted with roses. Its rooms are very different – some have French wallpaper and furniture from old castles, while others have very modern nudes adorning the walls – but they all have brand-

new bathrooms and Bang and Olufsen TVs. The à la carte restaurant (closed Monday) is a vision with its white walls, lemon chairs, chandeliers and sea views. Staff are very helpful, and access for people in wheelchairs is good.

## Eating

**Café Mocc@** (☎ 55 94 31 32; Havnepladsen 4; light lunches 50-90kr; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Thu, 10am-11pm Fri & Sat, 9am-9pm Sun Apr-Sep, noon-9pm Mon-Thu, 10am-11pm Fri & Sat, 10am-9pm Sun Oct-Mar) By the harbour, this care-free café-bar emits such summery vibes that even the cheesy 1980s music provokes nostalgia rather than homicidal thoughts. There's a light menu of pasta, omelettes, burgers and wraps, though many people just sit on the terrace with a beer, watching the boats.

**Skipperkroen** (☎ 55 99 22 00; Havnevej 1; mains 170-190kr; ☎ lunch & dinner) Also down at the harbour in the attractive old customs house, Skipperkroen has sea views and an engaging atmosphere. It has a meat menu, but this close to the water, you should really go for fish dishes, for example, the shellfish platter, butter-fried plaice, or surprise yourself with the catch of the day.

## Getting There & Away

Route 265 passes Præstø on its way between Næstved (25km) and Møn (26km).

Bus 79 connects Præstø with Næstved (39kr, 35 minutes) hourly, and bus 256 connects Præstø with Møn (39kr, 40 minutes) every two or three hours. There are no train services to Præstø.

## VORDINGBORG

pop 8923

It's worth popping in to Vordingborg on your way to the southern islands, to saunter up the cosy pedestrian avenue Algade and climb the medieval Goose Tower.

If you've time, Knudshoved Odde peninsula is a short drive from town. Here you can find a few public parking spots with access to grassy lawns and very narrow rocky beaches, where you can swim if the temperature's right.

Vordingborg's large natural harbour and strategic location on the strait played an important role in Denmark's early history. It was the royal residence of Valdemar I, who reunited the Danish kingdom in 1157 after a period of civil war, and it continued to be a favoured residence of Valdemar's descendants.

## Information

The **Vordingborg Turistkontor** (☎ 55 37 25 54; www.visitvordingborg.dk; Slotsruinen 1; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-May) is based inside the Sydsjællands Museum, next to the Goose Tower.

There are several banks on Algade, including **Nordea** (☎ 55 34 33 33; Algade 78). The **post office** (☎ 80 20 70 30; Årsleffsgade 1) is just north of the train station.

## Sights

The 14th-century **Gåsetårnet** (Goose Tower; ☎ 55 37 25 51; Slotsruinen 1; adult/under 18 incl Sydsjællands Museum 45kr/free, tower only 30kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-May), once part of a huge royal castle and fortress, is Scandinavia's best-preserved medieval tower and the only structure remaining from the Valdemar era. The name stems from 1365, when Valdemar IV placed a golden goose on top of the tower to express his scorn for the German Hanseatic League's declaration of war (Valdemar referred to the league as 'cackling geese'). The rest of the fortress, including seven other towers, has been demolished over the centuries but the 36m-high Gåsetårnet was spared because of its function as a navigational landmark. The tower's walls are an impressive 3ft thick in places, and you can climb the 107 steps for some pleasing views. Information boards are in Danish and German.

The fortress grounds, which have been turned into a park with walking paths, contain various brick and stone **foundation ruins** and a small **botanical garden** (admission free).

In addition, the grounds hold the **Sydsjællands Museum** (☎ 55 37 25 54; adult/under 18 30kr/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-May), Southern Zealand's regional history museum. At the time of writing, it was in a state of upheaval as a new tourist office and cinema were being built. It has a good collection of Stone Age weaponry, plus the bones of the elk, wild pigs, wolves and deer killed with the bone and flint arrows and harpoons. There are also sections on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Along the way, on the western side of Algade, is the brick-built **Vor Frue Kirke** (Kirketorvet; admission free; ☎ 10am-noon Mon-Fri Jun-Aug), whose oldest section is a mid-15th-century nave. Inside are elegant frescoes, and a Baroque altarpiece created in 1642 by master-carver Abel Schrøder.

## Activities

If you have your own transport, **Knudshoved Odde**, the narrow 18km-long peninsula west of Vordingborg, offers some hiking opportunities in an area known for its 'Bronze Age landscape'. A small herd of American buffalo roam the land, brought in by the Rosenfeldt family who own Knudshoved Odde. There's a car park (10kr) about halfway down the peninsula, where the trail begins.

## Sleeping

There are a few private homes in the Vordingborg area with rooms for rent for around 400kr – the tourist office should be able to give you a list.

**Ore Strand Camping** (☎ 55 37 06 03; fax 55 37 23 20; Orevej 145; camp site per person 60kr) The kitchen and toilets at this camping ground are on the dark and battered side, but the staff here are such sweeties, and the seafront location is so pleasant, that we would still recommend it. The beach has a Blue Flag award. The site is 2km southwest of town, and is well-signposted.

**Danhostel Vordingborg** (☎ 55 36 08 00; www.danhostel.dk/vordingborg; Præstegårdsvej 18; dm/s/d without bathroom 150/250/300kr, s/d with bathroom 300/400kr; ☎ year-round; ☎ ) This 112-bed hostel, about 2km north of town, is in a peaceful rural area, surrounded by paths and lakes. Rooms are pleasant and facilities good – brush up your pétanque skills, do the laundry or catch up on emails.

**Hotel Kong Valdemar** (☎ 55 34 30 95; www.hotelkongvaldemar.dk; Algade 101; s/d incl breakfast from 599/799kr; ☎ ) Opposite Gåsetårnet in the town centre, this hotel has 60 run-down rooms with bathroom and TV. Slightly larger rooms cost around 100kr extra.

## Eating

**Café Einstein** (☎ 55 37 61 61; Algade 66; sandwiches 60kr; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Black seats and white walls make a sharp modern statement at the light, airy Café Einstein. The shady courtyard is a good place to sit with a cup of coffee and a piece of cake, or grab a quick lunch. From June to August, there's live jazz on Saturday night.

**Café Piaf** (☎ 55 34 44 15; Algade 85; tapas 60kr; ☎ 10.30am-5.30pm Mon-Thu & Sat, 10.30am-9pm Fri, 10.30am-2pm Sun) This exceptionally friendly café, decorated with works by local artists, gets busy at lunchtime. In summer, there's a scramble for the eight outdoor tables in the

sunny courtyard. There's a nice brunch for 85kr, and a vegetarian version of the same for 65kr.

**Babette** (☎ 55 34 30 30; [www.babette.dk](http://www.babette.dk) in Danish; Kildemarksvej 4; 3-course meal 425kr; 🍷 lunch & dinner Wed-Fri, dinner Sat) If you're in the region it's definitely worth visiting Babette, 1km north of the centre, for a full gastronomic and aesthetic experience. The restaurant (named after the film *Babette's Feast*) is well known for its original pan-European cuisine, making use of local seasonal ingredients in sometimes unusual combinations – how about baked

turbot with spring cabbage and gooseberries? As well as super food, Babette is blessed with panoramic views over the sea, countryside and town.

### Getting There & Away

Vordingborg is 28km south of Næstved via Rte 22, and 13km from Møn via Rte 59.

By train, Vordingborg is 90 minutes from Copenhagen (108kr) and 20 minutes from Næstved (39kr). If you're en route to Møn, you'll need to switch from the train to the bus at Vordingborg train station; see p166.