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FEB 04 2013

A local's guide to eating out on a budget in Copenhagen

posted by Guest blogger - Alex Berger | 0 Comments



Our latest guest blogger is Alex Berger, founder of [VirtualWayfarer.com](#), somebody who's had the travel bug since 'before he could walk'. A native of the US, Alex now studies in the Danish capital where he runs his travel blog as well as study. To keep up-to-date with his travels make sure to [check out his blog](#), [follow him on Twitter](#) and [like his page on Facebook](#).

Welcome to Copenhagen. It's an incredible city full of wonderful side streets, cosy cafés and ridiculously overpriced meals. With the typical pay for a coffee shop job starting at about 110 DKK (€14.75/\$20) an hour, it's not so much that things are expensive relative to the economy, it's just that the rest of us don't get paid in Danish Kroner. Let's face it, when a medium Big Mac meal costs 53 DKK and a Cheeseburger costs 10 DKK, you know your budget is in trouble.

Thus, a challenge is born – how to eat out in Copenhagen without blowing the bank, especially if you're staying at one of the hostels in the city centre?

Cheap and Unhealthy

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In our [hostelworld.com](#) travel blog we bring you all the latest company news and information on new additions to the site including podcasts, videos and more. You'll also get inside information on a variety of destinations across the globe as they're visited by our travel editor and writers.

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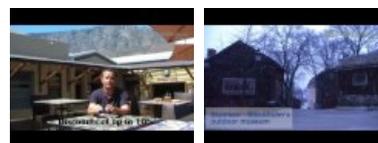
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Hot dog stands: Danes *love* their hot dogs. I've even had a few Danish hotdog vendors tell me they're *really* the ones who invented them. Quality of the dog, size and price varies from stand to stand. They can usually be found on major squares and near streets with a lot of bars. The basic Danish dog will cost you about 23 DKK and comes with the usual fixings. Make sure to opt for the fried onions and sweet relish pickles. In the worst case scenario, you can buy an overpriced dog from one of the many 7/11s. I suggest splurging a bit for one of the bacon-wrapped sausages or trying a bøfsandwich which most of the stands also sell. Need to save cash? Skip the soda.

Kebab and pizza places: You're a hosteller/backpacker, so it goes without saying that you're likely a kebab and falafel connoisseur. Unfortunately, while Copenhagen is a huge kebab city, there aren't many in the centre. There is one right around the corner from **Generator** near Nyhavn which is decent, if slightly pricey. The others in the centre mostly line Strøget, Copenhagen's main shopping street, and are so-so and fairly expensive. The best place for good kebabs is along Nørrebrogade just north of the lakes, which is an easy walk from the **Sleep in Heaven** hostel. My favourite is just around the corner off Sankt Hans Torv and is called Torvets Kebab. Here, a mixed meat durum will run you 33 DKK. Added perk? They have lines from Machiavelli's *The Prince* decorating the counter. Avoid King of Kebab despite the rock bottom prices.

You'll find that virtually all of the Kebab places in Copenhagen also offer pizza. Quality varies but most offer fairly decent lunch specials. Pizzas are decently sized and make a hearty meal for one person. Prices range from 35 DKK on lunch special (dirt cheap), up to about 65 DKK. If you're stuck in the centre, keep an eye open for pure pizza places. There are several that sell it by the slice or as a whole pizza near Nyhavn along Gothersgade.

Asian takeaway: You'll only find these places in the centre. They typically sell a small box for 35-40 DKK which you can fill with mix-and-match Chinese food. Chances of food poisoning are lower than you might expect but these places exist almost exclusively to feed tourists.

Cheap and Healthy...ish



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Bagel shops: Copenhagen is overflowing with bagel shops. Cost of a bagel usually runs between 40 and 60 DKK. There are a couple solid ones along Gothersgade right off of Nyhavn/Kongens Nytorv. Want something delicious and semi-Danish? They make great lox bagels with smoked Scandinavian salmon.

Salad shops: Salad shops are really hip right now. Personally, I think they're overpriced and always leave you hungry...but, then again, I have a voracious appetite and would make the world's worst vegetarian. If you're careful and you keep an eye out for student discounts or lunch specials, you'll be able to get a solid meal in for about 40-60 DKK...I say opt for a pizza for the same price.

Smørrebrød: This is as Danish a meal as you'll find. Over-simplistically called open-faced sandwiches, smørrebrød is a core staple of the Danish diet. Unfortunately, they usually make it themselves at home or get it in the cafeteria at work. You'll find a lot of flashy smørrebrød on the menus around Nyhavn. It's mostly overpriced. If you want the real deal you'll have to head up to Nørrebro or Østerbro. I highly recommend [Rita's Smørrebrød](#), where a piece of regular smørrebrød costs you 12 DKK. Three-to-five of these will fill you up. Just make sure you get there before one or they'll sell out. They're also closed weekends. I've heard great things about Lene's Smørrebrød at Nordre Frihavnsgade 63 in Østerbro. You can learn more about traditional Danish food [here](#).

Alternatively, you can pop into one of the local supermarkets (Netto and Fakta are cheaper ones, while Irma and Super Brugsen are more expensive) and make your own smørrebrød. Just buy some rugbrød, mixed meats and remoulade and enjoy!

Budget-friendly



All-you-can-eats: In the city centre you'll find a lot of all-you-can-eat buffets. Your mileage will vary and the quality is quite mixed but the price and volume is right. You'll see people along Strøget holding signs for these. I usually end up at [Samos](#), which is close to CPH Downtown Hostel. Their lunch buffet isn't remarkable but is all-you-can-eat and goes from 11:30-17:00. It also costs 49 DKK. If you order a drink make sure to specify it's a small or you'll pay about the same price for the drink as you did for the meal. The dinner buffet is almost identical and costs 79 DKK. Dalle Valle (see below) may be a better option.

Dalle Valle: One of my favourite places in Copenhagen. While quality is slowly eroding and drinks are overpriced, they run a 50%-off special on their entire menu from 17:00-23:00 Saturday-Tuesday. If you want to try more fancy Danish food, this is the place to do it. You can pick up a nice steak for 65 DKK on special, or their signature Dalle Valle Burger with great potato wedges for 50 DKK. You do usually have to purchase a drink as part of the special. Just specify a small coke or water, which will run you 20-25 DKK.

Dalle Valle also offers a lunch buffet (59 DKK) seven days a week, with a dinner buffet (69 DKK) running Wednesday-Friday. I hear that their buffets are quite good though I haven't had the chance to check them out yet. Given the general quality of their food, I have no reason to doubt that it'll be one of the best budget options in the city centre.

Paludan: A student favorite, [this café/coffee shop/restaurant](#) has a fantastic ambiance and is very popular with students. If you've got a student ID you *may* be able to take advantage of their 25 DKK pint of Carlsberg between 17:00-22:00. While not terribly

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cheap, Paludan is affordable by Danish standards. Most entrées run between 60-100 DKK and are fresh, well-prepared and decent portions. It's also a great place to grab a coffee.

Banana Joe's: This is a quirky little hole-in-the-wall burger joint/takeaway that has some of the best budget burgers in Copenhagen. Usually open from 16:30-22:00, it's a one-man operation. The burgers are large and made with real beef or chicken (unlike the usual Kebab 'burger'). Prices are a bargain and the owner loves social people who eat in. The special Banana Joe Burger with an egg on top is a personal favourite. Burgers range from 30-50 DKK. It's located just off Nørrebrogade around the corner from Sankt Hans Torv.

Remember that while food in Copenhagen is pretty expensive, the upside is that you don't have to tip for drinks or food. Good luck, and welcome to Copenhagen!

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