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72 Hours in Copenhagen

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Copenhagen is about far more than the Little Mermaid and Carlsberg beer: history, cobblestone streets, Nordic cuisine, canals, and royalty all set against a backdrop of ancient parks and gardens. As you plan your visit to Copenhagen you'll need to prepare yourself for a wealth of tantalizing experiences. These range from a rich architectural and design heritage to a captivatingly subtle and mouth-watering culinary tradition.

The vast majority of visitors fall in love with Copenhagen because it is cozy with an intimate feel. Copenhagen as a city and Danish culture as a whole are what set the city apart. This makes a visit to Copenhagen deeply personalized, flexible, and experientially rich.

The Perfect City for a 72-hour Visit

While the Copenhagen metro area covers a decent chunk of the eastern part of the island of Sjælland as well as adjacent Amager, central Copenhagen is extremely compact, walkable, and can be explored comfortably in 72 hours. The key to Copenhagen is to understand its central neighborhoods. These are the City Center, Nørrebro, Vesterbro, Østerbro, Nordvest, Frederiksberg, Christianshavn, and Amager. A fantastic metro system, prolific bike culture, and flat urban landscape makes crisscrossing the city a breeze.

Light, Color and Hygge

As the most southern of the Nordic capitals, Copenhagen has long summer days and mild winters making it an excellent destination year-round. In summer months, it is an incredible city with a vibrant outdoor culture that revolves around BBQing, outdoor festivals, and locals soaking up every ounce of sun possible. In winter, another side of Copenhagen emerges. It is during these months that you discover the Danes' love affair with coziness, candles and their powerful use of brightly painted buildings to bring warmth and light to long winter nights. Described as hygge, this sense of intimacy shapes the feel of Danish daily life. It embodies the Danish mindset and is a powerful part of what makes Copenhagen such a welcoming and pleasant city to spend time in.

Ready to explore the city? Here are the must-sees for your 72 hour Copenhagen experience.

72 Hours in Copenhagen



DAY ONE

Morning

Begin your introduction to Copenhagen at **Nørreport Station**. The station serves as one of the city's central transit hubs and rests right in the heart of the historic center. Pause to marvel at the sea of bike parking before heading to nearby **Ørstedsparken**. In the park, walk the path to the historic iron bridge, cross the lake, then winding back up and out into **Israels Plads**. The recently renovated square provides an unusual example of urban renovation and sits immediately beside **Torvehallerne**. Torvehallerne is a beautiful mixed-theme market built in a traditional European style that boasts everything from fish mongers to **Smørrebrød** vendors, restaurants and spice merchants. Browse the market and, depending on how early you start, grab a traditional Danish (called a Wien brød in Denmark), Smørrebrød or a coffee before circling back to Nørreport and into the city's lovely Botanical Gardens.



(http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-1-Nyhavn-DAY1_1.jpg)

Nyhavn

The **Botanical Gardens** were re-located and expanded to their current location in 1870. They are free to enter and are spectacularly beautiful. Highlights include the flower hill, which is layered with a revolving mixture of labeled botanicals, and the Old Palm House, built in 1874, which boasts an old wrought iron spiral stairway to a circular skywalk. Exit the botanical gardens and cross ØsterVoldgade to **Rosenborg Castle**. If enticed by Royal Danish history, explore the museum and enjoy the **Danish Royal Jewels**. Otherwise, loop across the old moat and into **Kongens Have** (the King's Garden). Pause immediately behind Rosenborg Castle in the **Rose Gardens** before criss-crossing Kongens Have, created in 1606, with its impressive tree-lined boulevards. Pause at the statue of **Hans Christian Andersen**, before exiting onto **Kronprinsessegade**.



(http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-5-Rosenborg-Castle-DAY1_2.jpg)



(http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-3-Nyboder-DAY1_3.jpg)

Walk north-east, pausing to look at the multi-hued streets of **Rosengade**, **Fredericiagade**, and **Olfert Fischers Gade** before arriving at **Nyboder**. These bright orange former (and current) navy barracks, built between the 1630s and 1790s, are home to some of Copenhagen's most picture-perfect streets. These streets were featured on the cover of the 2014 feature film "Copenhagen" and appear regularly in Danish movies and films.

From Nyboder take ØsterVoldgade to its intersection with Oslo Pl., cross the street, and enter the park that skirts **Kastellet**, Copenhagen's star-shaped fortress. Built in the mid-1600s the fortress was designed to oppose gunpowder assaults, served as the anchor for Copenhagen's moat system (still partially visible on your map today), and is one of the best preserved star fortresses in Europe. Enjoy a leisurely stroll along the moat and wrap around past the **Monument to Mariners** to reach Copenhagen's famous **Little Mermaid**. The statue has come to be one of Copenhagen's iconic symbols but is generally viewed as an overrated tourist attraction by locals and tourists alike.

For a far more powerful and representative statue, continue along the external wall of Kastellet until you reach the **Anglican Church** and **Gefion Fountain**. One of the largest monuments in Copenhagen, the fountain dates back to the same period as the Little Mermaid, but is far more impressive and depicts the formation of the island of Sjaelland (where Copenhagen resides) by the Norse goddess Gefjun.

From the Gefion Fountain enter Kastellet, which is still an active military base and enjoy the beautiful **red buildings**, taking time to mount the fortress wall, and to visit one of Copenhagen's only remaining **windmills**.

From Kastellet make your way to **Nyhavn**, one of Scandinavia's most picturesque spots. The café-lined 17th century harbor is also home to five historic ships owned by the National Museum as well as a rotating mixture of private and public historic sailing vessels. Make sure not to miss the red **lighthouse boat**, one of Copenhagen's most unique vessels.

Nyhaven, which translates roughly to new-harbor, is the perfect spot to pause and enjoy a moderately priced lunch-time meal. Despite being the central hub of tourist activity in Copenhagen, Nyhavn retains relatively fair prices and is popular among locals and visitors alike. For a lunch-time alternative, make your way to the end of Nyhavn where it opens into the much larger Copenhagen harbor, and cross the recently opened bridge to **Copenhagen Street Food** where you'll find a wide assortment of meals.

Afternoon

After a hearty Danish lunch make your way from Nyhavn to the **Royal Playhouse**, situated along **Copenhagen Harbor**. Pause to enjoy the view from the wooden boardwalk while taking in the structure's architecture. Make sure to take note of the **Opera House**, situated across the harbor. The Copenhagen Opera House was completed in 2004 and remains one of the most expensive opera houses ever built. It stands as a constant reminder of the role that shipping conglomerate Maersk, and its founder A.P. Møller, have played in shaping the city of Copenhagen.

From the Royal Playhouse, walk along the harbor, past additional historic sailing vessels, until you reach **Amalienborg Palace**, which remains the official winter residence for the Danish Royal Family. The palace, which actually consists of four identical palaces completed in 1760, were acquired from lesser nobles and turned into a primary royal residence in 1795. Pause to note the small patch of blast damage left as a tribute to a WWII assassination attempt, watch the Royal Guards (but don't get too close) and consider a Palace tour before continuing on to the adjacent **Marble Church**. The Marble Church took nearly 150 years to complete, was finished in 1895, boasts one of the largest domes in Europe, and is the largest dome in Scandinavia. Guided tours are offered twice daily and provide a unique view of Amalienborg Palace.



(http://5.79.17.43/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-9-Amalienborg-Palace-DAY1_4.jpg)

Amalienborg Palace

From The Marble Church head down the road to **Design Museum Denmark**. This easy to traverse museum provides a wide spectrum of exhibits and serves as a lovely introduction to world famous Danish design. Once you've enjoyed the Design Museum return to Nyhavn and choose between one of the two **canal tours**. Even if you're not a fan of organized tours these are a must as they open up access to a side of Copenhagen (and areas) that are otherwise inaccessible.

Evening

After taking some time to recharge, consider what slice of Nordic cuisine you're in the mood for and your budget allows. In recent years the rise of **Nordic cooking** has put Copenhagen on the culinary map. This movement started with the restaurant **Noma**, but has expanded to encompass the entire region with its focus on individual takes on unique ingredients, locally-sourced seasonal food, and exciting forms of preparation. It's no coincidence that Noma has now claimed the title of best Restaurant in the world multiple years in a row. For slightly more accessible options consider **Radio**, **BROR**, or **AoC**. Want something less specific? Head to **Vesterbro** and explore the large collection of eateries ranging from authentic Chinese to burgers and more traditional Danish eats. To finish the night consider exploring one of Copenhagen's jazz dives such as the **Jazzhouse** or **Mojo**. For something a bit more posh, seek out one of the city's fantastic cocktail bars. Popular locations include **Ruby's**, **The Barking Dog** and **1105**.

DAY TWO

Morning

Begin your morning just outside **Illum**, one of Denmark's most famous department stores on **Stroget**, Scandinavia's longest pedestrian shopping street. Pause to enjoy the **Stork Fountain** before making your way up Købmagergade to the **Round Tower**. The Round Tower was completed in 1642 and is another of King Christian IV's incredible building projects. Well worth visiting, note the spiral tower on the interior that takes you up to the observatory, which is the oldest functioning observatory in Europe. The platform on top also provides a spectacular view of central Copenhagen. After the tower duck into the attached **Trinitatis Church**. Also completed in 1642, the church reflects the fascinating relationship that existed at the time between the faith, the university, and science.



(<http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-15-Christiansborg-Palace->

DAY2_1.jpg)

Christiansborg Palace

Careful to watch the clock, make sure you head to the Gothersgade Gate for Rosenborg Palace just before the stroke of 11:30. At 11:30 on the dot a detachment of **Royal Guards** will depart the **Royal Barracks** on their way to Amalienborg Palace. If nobles are in residence the normal detachment will be joined by the **Royal Marching Band** for a roughly 30-minute march through the city. Join them for part, or all of the route for an exciting taste of long-standing Copenhagen tradition.

Afternoon

Make your way to **Christiansborg Palace**, making sure to grab a small snack along the way. Completed in the early 1900s, Christiansborg Palace is just the latest incarnation in a long line of castles and palaces that have occupied the spot since the 1100s, two of which were consumed by fire. Though called a palace, Christiansborg is currently the seat of the **Danish Government**. Explore Christiansborg, consider one of the on-site museums, or look into taking the free trip up the tower for another expansive view. Once satiated, head to the nearby **Tøjhus Museum**. This small museum dedicated to military history and arms boasts a series of innovative and powerful exhibits. Visitors should make sure not to miss the top floor.



(http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-18-Christianshavn-and-GoBoats-DAY2_2.jpg) Next, step immediately around the corner and into the **Royal Library Garden** to pay homage to the statue of famous philosopher **Søren Kierkegaard**. Consider stepping into the **Danish Jewish Museum** or continue to the main entrance of the **Black Diamond** (Royal Library). Built as an extension to the original Royal Library, the Black Diamond was designed by Danish architect Schmidt Hammer Lassen.

From the Royal Library make your way across Knippelsbro Bridge to **Christianshavn**. On Christianshavn explore the historic part of town designed and re-claimed from the swamp by Christian IV and a team of Dutch engineers with a charter to make the area feel like Amsterdam. Pause at **Christianshavn Kanal** and walk along a brief stretch before arriving at **Vor Frelzers Kirke** "the Church of Our Savior". The cathedral, completed in 1752 is one of the most unique in Scandinavia. If you think your feet can handle it, scale the 400 steps which will take you out to the outside of the spire, and then wrap you up and around until it tapers off just shy of the golden ball at the top. It's a rare and unusual experience.

From Vor Frelzers Kirke head to the free town of **Christiania** nearby. Created in the 1970s when a group of free spirits and creatives began squatting in an abandoned military base, the free town is a compelling social experiment beloved by the Danish people and tolerated by the Danish government. A semi-autonomous commune, the community is home to roughly 900 residents which largely self-govern. While most famous for the **Green Light District**, the rest of Christiania is quite different and should not be overlooked. The area is safe, just avoid taking photos or using your

phone in the area designated as **Pusher Street**. Delve deeper into Christiania to enjoy vegan restaurants, falafel stands, eateries and traditional cafes. Grab lunch, marvel at the urban nature and spend some time exploring. Hidden deep within Christiania you'll find a school, swans, and even a stables.

Evening

After enjoying a rest, once again consider sampling **Nordic cuisine**. If you're on a tighter budget, **Halifax Burger** is quite popular. Alternately, you can choose to sample Danish hot dogs from one of the hot dog stands or hunt down a famous, traditional, **Flæskesteg sandwich** (a local favourite is **Harry's Place** – situated a short trip from the city center). For a closer option head to **Kødbyen**, the Meat Packing District, for a variety of trendy eateries. Between Thursday and Saturday it is also one of the hippest places in the city for bars and nightlife.



(http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-13-Stroget-DAY2_3.jpg)

Stroget

For something more traditional consider catching a **concert**, the **opera**, **ballet** or a **show** at one of the city's plethora of exciting cultural venues. Prices are reasonable and the talent level in Copenhagen is extraordinary.

DAY THREE

Dedicate your final day to amusement parks and museums. Consider starting your day at the **National Museum**. It is a sprawling free museum that boasts a wide assortment of exhibits which range from Viking era rune stones, weapons, coins, a ship, a wagon, and a mummified bog body to pre-historic fossils, ancient arms and armor, and a re-production of an ornately carved wooden merchant's bedroom. The nearby **Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek** is also well worth a visit and houses a collection built upon Carl Jacobsen's (Carlsberg) collection. Free on Tuesdays, it houses one of the largest Rodin collections outside of France, a wonderful mixture of archeological finds including mummies, great Danish sculpture, art work, and 40 works by Gauguin.



(http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-10-Central-Copenhagen-DAY3_1.jpg)

Central Copenhagen

For something more modern, consider making the trip out to the **Louisiana Museum of Modern Art**, Copenhagen's world famous modern art museum which is also known for its unique architecture and design. Alternately, in summer months you can contrast it with a visit to the **Open Air Museum**, "Frilandsmuseet", which is one of the oldest open air museums in the world and home to more than 50 structures from the last 350 years.

Balance the brain-infusion of a visit to several of these museums with a trip to one of Copenhagen's historic amusement parks. The city boasts the oldest amusement park in the world. Situated just outside town within **Jægersborg Dyrehave**, a recently added UNESCO World Heritage Site, **Dyrehavsbakken**, called "Bakken", is a seasonal amusement park that originally opened in 1583. Visiting in the winter or want a more city-based experience? Visit the slightly newer and more impressive **Tivoli Gardens**, situated in the heart of Copenhagen. Tivoli Gardens dates back to 1843 and includes a wooden rollercoaster originally introduced in 1914 alongside a number of much more modern rides. Even if you don't go for the rides, Tivoli boasts a wide assortment of restaurants, beer gardens, and beautiful scenery.

Feel a visit to Copenhagen isn't complete without an authentic dose of Viking history, but not feeling satiated by the exhibits in the National Museum? Hop a train to nearby Roskilde for a visit to the **Viking Ship Museum**. In addition to the remains of several recovered Viking ships, you'll also see carefully crafted re-creations built using traditional tools and specifications drawn from the recovered vessels.



(<http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-20-National-Museum->



(http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-21-Magstræde-DAY3_3.jpg)



(<http://5.79.17.43/vc/72-hours-in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Image-22-Central-Copenhagens-Canals->

[DAY3_2.jpg](#)[DAY3_3.jpg](#)

Come and visit Copenhagen to experience firsthand why the city has become one of Europe's most desirable destinations. While it will only take you a few hours to fall in love with Copenhagen, your 72 hour visit is sure to leave a lasting impression that inspires and enchants you with Scandinavia's irresistible charm.

Need more inspiration? Please browse through our range of [things to do in Copenhagen](https://www.expedia.co.uk/Things-To-Do-In-Copenhagen.d178252.Travel-Guide-Activities) (<https://www.expedia.co.uk/Things-To-Do-In-Copenhagen.d178252.Travel-Guide-Activities>).

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