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AND PUBLICITY

Happy Copenhagen

*Denmark is regularly voted as the world's happiest country.
Baltic Outlook heads to the capital to find out why.*

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The UN's *World Happiness Report* recently named Denmark as the happiest country in the world. What's more, the Scandinavian country has topped the European Commission's well-being and happiness index for an astonishing 40 years in a row. The report's life evaluation score takes a range of factors into account, including income (GDP per capita), health, life expectancy at birth, freedom to make life choices, social support, corruption and generosity.

To understand why Danes are so happy, take a look at the cosmopolitan capital city of Copenhagen. Almost 2 million people live in its metropolitan area, or over one-third of the country's population. The city's reputation is drawing a growing influx of talented foreigners looking to start a new life; over 20% of Copenhagen residents have been born outside of Denmark. Identifying specific factors contributing to happiness is hard, but spend some time in the Danish capital and several clear trends emerge.

1

A green capital with sustainable industry

Right now Copenhagen is revelling in its status as European Green Capital for 2014, with the ambition of becoming the world's first carbon-neutral capital by 2025. Copenhagen is a good model in terms of urban planning and design.

streets during the morning rush-hour and you will see more cyclists than drivers. In a recently published article, the *Copenhagenize Design Company* noted that cycling is not only environmentally friendly, but can also be the fastest way to travel in a busy city. Cycling into the downtown area from the suburb of Østerbro is eight minutes faster than taking public transport,

work began on *Amager Bakke*, a 100-metre-tall waste-to-energy plant that will incorporate a ski slope on its roof. As visitors take a glass elevator up to the slope, they will be able to a glimpse at the inner workings of the power plant below.

The plant's smokestack is to blow out a smoke ring every time a tonne of CO² is released, as a reminder of the environmental



The King's Gardens are the country's oldest royal gardens

It is also something of a transport pioneer, aiming to become the world's most practicable city for cyclists. Its goal is to have 50% of people cycling to their place of work or education later this decade, up from the already impressive 35% who currently do so on over 1000 km of cycle lanes in Greater Copenhagen.

Copenhageners feel like they are part of the green solution. Step out onto the

COPENHAGEN IS AIMING TO BECOME THE WORLD'S MOST PRACTICABLE CITY FOR CYCLISTS

while from Havneholmen the difference is a sizable 14 minutes.

Then there is the issue of industry and its resulting pollution. Combining a ski resort with an energy plant is something few cities would consider, let alone build. In 2013,

impact of consumption. Due to be completed in 2016, the plant will treat 400,000 tonnes of waste every year, generating power for 50,000 households, while another 120,000 will receive district heating from the plant.

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2

Outdoor lifestyle

The focus on the outdoors in Copenhagen is hard to ignore, as evidenced by the large number of cyclists on the city streets. Copenhagen has many parks and gardens where

artistic adventure playground, and even jazz concerts in the summer months.

Another popular spot is the picture-postcard Nyhavn. Originally a busy commercial port where sailors and their companions made merry and drink ale, modern Nyhavn



The focus on the outdoors in Copenhagen is hard to ignore

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people can relax, sunbathe, go for a stroll, or just hang out with friends. In fact, it is now official policy that by 2015, all residents must be able to reach a park or beach on foot in less than 15 minutes.

Kongens Have (King's Garden) is the largest city park and a big draw for local families. It's home to Rosenborg Castle, sculptures, a rose garden, the Hercules Pavilion, the symmetrical Renaissance *Krumspringet* garden, an

serves a similar function, albeit for a wider cross-section of people. Writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) lived in three different houses here and it's easy to imagine him watching the busy life of Nyhavn pass by as he penned his early fairy tales.

The quality of the water in and around the city is extremely high. Locals take advantage by cooling off in the summer or taking an invigorating winter dip in one of the many harbour



Copenhageners love to go for swims or perhaps spend an entire day at the beach

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THE QUALITY OF THE WATER IN AND AROUND THE CITY IS EXTREMELY HIGH

baths, such as the *Havneparken* waterfront park. It's located at the Islands Brygge, a former industrial area turned into a fashionable residential neighbourhood. The park retains several features from the neighbourhood's industrial past, including old railway tracks and an upside-down ship hull that serves as a pavilion.

It should come as no surprise that Copenhagen's biggest tourist attraction is set outdoors. Open since 1843, the Tivoli Gardens are the second oldest amusement park in the world. For locals, who make up a good proportion of the park's 4 million annual visitors, Tivoli is far more than rollercoasters and arcades; it is equally as popular as a place to dine out and people-watch.

"Copenhagen has led the way in people-based planning. It's not about

planning buildings, it's about planning spaces to make a really good liveable city," says George Ferguson, the mayor of Bristol, whose city inherits the European Green Capital title from Copenhagen in 2015.

Despite the awards and success for Copenhagen, the administration acknowledges that it can continue to improve quality of life for its residents.

"We have a long way to go in noise-reduction and we can learn from Bristol. We have a long way to go in waste management and we can learn from Vienna. When it comes to an efficient bus system, then we can learn a lot from Sweden. In picking up the best examples from all around Europe, Copenhagen can improve its position", says Morten Kabell, the mayor of Copenhagen's Technical and Environmental Administration.

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Simple attitudes to food

The new 2014 edition of the *Michelin Guide* has awarded 17 stars to 15 restaurants in Copenhagen, the highest number ever. As a result, the

the globe. However, despite the glamour of world-famous restaurants such as *Noma*, many Copenhageners bypass the gourmet trends and take a simplistic approach to eating, according to Copenhagen chef and food writer Katrine Klinken.

food, our eating habits are still dominated by bulk, international and mainstream food. Most people want fast shopping and easy cooking in everyday life, and do not know much about seasoning, real cooking, growing crops and animal life. The city has more discount supermarkets than ever before", she says.

"Having said that, things have changed. Public schools in Copenhagen now serve organic food and new schools called *madskoler* are built with kitchens that involve pupils in the preparation of food. Food cooperatives like Bees in the City and Urban Gardening have also popped up in recent years," she adds.

According to Klinken, the high number of Michelin-starred restaurants has not had a major impact on how the average Copenhageners eat at home. The most popular Danish meal for both locals and tourists remains *smørrebrød*, a simple open-faced sandwich consisting of cold cuts, pieces

of meat or fish, cheese or spreads.

"The trend of using low-quality ingredients is changing and we do have good examples of good bread and *pålæg* (toppings). *Smørrebrød* is surviving in a world where more international foods are available, but very few modern restaurants actually serve it. Lunchtime in the Danish capital is not as busy as in Stockholm, Paris and other big cities. In Copenhagen you work during the daytime and eat the biggest meal at home or at a restaurant in the evening.

"A lot of people are dining out more. Many small and relaxed restaurants have opened and food is being presented in new ways. As always, food trends are changing. Right now, wild herbs are popular. In any case, more locals have the possibility to experience food as culture and art, even though most regular food has not changed," Klinken explains.



An increasing number of locals are experiencing food as culture and art

food scene is drawing more and more tourists from all over

"Even though we consume more fresh and organic

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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL



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is easy to connect
with other people,
including business
partners

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Creating companies of the future

Last year, *Fortune* magazine named Copenhagen as one of the seven best global cities for startups, and with good reason. After all, two of the most popular programming languages, C++ and *Ruby on Rails*, were invented by Danes.

"Soon we won't be asking: 'Where's the next Silicon Valley?' Instead, the question on everyone's lips may be: 'Where's the next Copenhagen?'" writes the magazine.

While Copenhagen ranks well for educational institutions and digital infrastructure, what really makes a startup scene develop is its people. Success breeds success, and Copenhagen's status as a startup hub is drawing in global companies by the hundreds. According to local entrepreneur Simon Stubben from *Project Canvas* (www.projectcanvas.dk), "We have so much talent here. My startup has great people from the UK, Pakistan and Belarus, all working at our Copenhagen office. The emergence of Copenhagen as a startup capital has only just begun."

"Copenhagen to me is friends, a friendly and happy culture, and a great lifestyle.

The city may seem provincial compared to international capitals, but I see this as a plus. It's easy to get from place to place quickly and to connect with the relevant people. As a capital, Copenhagen is beautiful with its old buildings, cosy

COPENHAGEN'S STATUS AS A STARTUP HUB IS DRAWING IN GLOBAL COMPANIES BY THE HUNDREDS

with its many parks, but expensive with the high cost of the Danish living," he continued.

It's this high cost of living that might dampen Copenhagen's tech ambitions, as early-stage entrepreneurs often need to live as cheaply as possible for a year or more while they "bootstrap" their business and look for countries with beneficial corporate tax regimes. Nevertheless, the progress of Copenhagen as a regional centre for tech entrepreneurship has been impressive.



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The art of hygge

If one word was to sum up the Danish lifestyle, then that would be *hygge*. Notoriously difficult to translate, *hygge* falls somewhere between cosiness, friendliness and togetherness. This word says a lot about the uniqueness of the Danish lifestyle, with a focus on socialising and relaxing with family and good friends. Although often used at mealtimes or in bars, *hygge* has more to do with the atmosphere and social interaction than the setting itself. *Hygge* can describe the raising of spirits during cold and gloomy winters, as well as the experience of grilling *pølser* (sausages) over a grill after a long bicycle ride on a summer evening.

The meaning of *hygge* is best discovered at Christmas time. Danes gather with their families on Christmas Eve for a big celebration with hearty food and drink. Under one local tradition, an unchopped almond is hidden in the *risalamande*, a creamy rice dessert, with a prize on offer for the person who finds it in their serving. The food is basic and the home is candlelit, putting the focus firmly on conversation,

singing songs and togetherness.

It's hard to pinpoint how much this vague concept fuels Danish happiness, but as the UN's *World Happiness Report* has noted, mental health and social support are known to affect well-being. Professor of Economics Christian

DANES *FEEL
EMPOWERED TO BE ABLE TO
CHANGE SOMETHING IN THEIR
LIFE IF THEY DON'T LIKE IT*

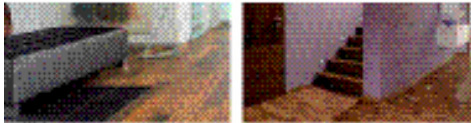
Bjørnskov from the Aarhus Business School wrote his PhD on happiness. According to him, one factor that makes Danes so happy "is that they are very trusting of people they don't know. Also just as importantly, Danes feel empowered to be able to change something in their life if they don't like it."

He then refers to the importance of *hygge*:

"We spend our money differently here. We don't buy big houses or big cars. We like to spend our money on socialising with others."



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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL

Five outdoor hot spots

Where the locals relax

Kongens Have – the gardens of Rosenborg Castle

Nyhavn – the colourful 17th-century waterfront

Fælledparken – the largest park in Copenhagen

Havneparken – the former docklands at the Islands Brygge

Superkilen – a brand new urban landscape in Nørrebro



The old port at Nyhavn is filled with people enjoying the relaxed atmosphere by the canal, jazz music and great food

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A lovely summer day at Copenhagen's harbourfront

© THOMAS ROUSING



Copenhagen's rising stars

Here are the city's three new Michelin-starred restaurants:

Marchal

Inspired by Nordic and French classics with a twist
Kongens Nytorv 34
www.marchal.dk

Clou

Simplicity meets luxury at an establishment run by brothers Jonathan and Alexander Berntsen
Borgergade 16
www.restaurant-clou.dk

Studio at the Standard

Ingredients inspired by nature from all around the world
Havnegade 44
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