

ERASMUS Copenhagen

Københavns Universitet – Science Faculty



Location Decision

I decided to go abroad during a summer semester after I finished my bachelor degree. Researching for possible countries, I found Denmark and Netherlands the most interesting. To see which city/country fits my interests the best, I checked the offered courses by the universities and also different information about the cities. My final preference was Copenhagen.

Housing

After getting accepted by my home university and the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), the biggest task was to find housing. UCPH referred to the Housing Foundation, which is, as they say, independent of the UCPH. As it turned out to be really hard to find some other housing, I chose the Housing Foundation. The rent was ridiculously high (~ 800 €/month). But since I had no other choice, I had to live with it. During my stay it turned out that the Housing Foundation is a really bad landlord, charging you for a lot of different things and trying to keep as much deposit as they can, after you leave. I can only recommend to find some other housing, that is not rented out by the Housing Foundation. Danish students live mostly in way cheaper dorms (~ 350€ / month), but you have to wait several years to get a room in these dorms. So try to find housing directly after you are accepted to the programme.

Arrival

During my preparation, the UCPH offered a Buddy programme, where a small group of students is mentored by local students. This turned out to be very useful for my start in Copenhagen. My buddy picked up the keys for my room and also took me from the train station to my new home. The buddy programme also offered a variety of activities to get started in Copenhagen and I stayed friends with my buddy for the whole time there.

Danish Language

I spend the first three weeks in a danish language course, trying to understand the difficult pronunciation Danes use. I learned some daily life danish, to get around doing grocery shopping and other every day activities. However nearly all Danes switch to english as soon as they notice you are not a Dane. This makes it hard to practice your danish skills in normal life.

Transportation

The first thing to get in Copenhagen is a bike. This is the most convenient and cheapest way to commute. Even in winter, when I arrived everyone was biking and so was I. To this day I don't know how a metro or bus looks from the inside in Copenhagen. For commutes with trains, you might buy a Rejsekort (travel card with discount compared to normal prices) , which you can use for all public transport means. To get a bike there are a lot of different second hand places, where you can find cheap bikes.

Study system

After getting settled in my new home and finishing my danish language course, the university courses started immediately. At the SCIENCE faculty the semester is split into two blocks. You can choose up to three courses per block (recommended are 2). You can change your courses until the end of the first week of lectures, which made it easy to find the right course. As continuous assessment, I had to hand in assignments regularly (the frequency of the hand-ins varied from weekly to monthly). The examination in all my courses was oral, which I enjoyed more than written exams.

The communication between the students and the teachers is, in my opinion, more relaxed in Copenhagen than in Hannover. You talk to everyone using their first name (not only in university), which takes a lot of formality from the communication. There were several times, we went for lunch with our professor or discussed on things besides the lecture topics.

I really liked the block system, since I was able to focus more on special subjects. During the last block I only took one course, to have some more free time during the summer time and explore Denmark a little more.

Everyday life

The winter is more dark in Copenhagen, even though it's only a few hundred kilometers further north. Due to this, I did a lot of indoor sports. I found a local table tennis club, where I could



compete with local players and also went bouldering regularly. The winter time gave us some time to explore touristic spots of the city, while these spots were mostly empty.

When it turned to spring weather, it was really nice to stay at the sea and all the lakes, to hang out in the sun. Swimming was only possible in the last weeks of my stay in June. With the good weather even more cyclist use the bike lane and sometimes small traffic jams formed. But, as I am a big bike enthusiast, this was one of the most fun things to do. Cycling through the city and looking around. The cycle lanes are not only in the city center but also continue to the countryside, which gives you the perfect opportunity to do extended bike trips. I bought a road bike and went on these trips every week. Denmark has some beautiful landscapes along the coast and it is very easy to go on a bike trip there.

Copenhagen has a lot of activities to offer and there is something to do every day. There are many different parks, e.g. the Botanical Garden with a butterfly house. Furthermore there are a lot of skate parks, which are even lit up during the night. I spent most of my evenings/nights in the summer at the skate park having good session directly at the water. There was also one of Europe's biggest skate event Copenhagen Open, where many pro skaters came to Copenhagen.

Prices in Denmark are unfortunately a bit higher than in Germany. The ERASMUS-grant didn't even cover my rent. However there are different options to get some more money. If you have a room with own bathroom and kitchenette you can get the Boligstøtte, which is a housing subsidy (it's calculated by your rent). As a exchange student you can not get the Statens Uddannelsesstøtte, which is a grant that every danish student gets. But it's easy to find some job, such as a food deliverer, which many of my friends did.

Summary

Overall I enjoyed my stay in Copenhagen very much and I'm looking forward to head back there and meet all my friends again. I would definitely recommend a summer semester since the weather only got better and more and more activity opportunities arise. However the start in the dark winter can be a bit annoying. Be prepared to spend more money than at home, but it is definitely worth it.

