

Copenhagen, Denmark

[www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)



# Copenhagen warms the heart in winter

Travellers looking to take in a city break are increasing seeking out the smaller capitals of Europe and Copenhagen is an excellent choice in this respect.

The Danish capital enjoys a cosmopolitan vibrancy, while also offering a more relaxed short stay experience than say Paris, Rome or London.

Over two or three nights there is the chance to get to know Copenhagen and really embrace this 'wonderful' city and its people.

And though most travellers will opt for a spring or summer visit, Copenhagen provides a quite different experience during the darker days of the Danish winter.

[www.visitcopenhagen.com](http://www.visitcopenhagen.com)

**Ashley Gibbins**  
Commissioning Editor  
**AllWays traveller**





# You must go but not in winter! Really?

By Ashley Gibbins

**When planning our first visit to Copenhagen Ann and I opted for early December - for three reasons.**

To begin with, those we knew who had been to Copenhagen would wax lyrical about the charms of this city, without exception.

We were told what a wonderfully vibrant city this, but tended to add a caveat.

*"Make sure you go spring and summer, Copenhagen is a no-go during winter".*

Well that's a challenge for a journalist if there ever was one.

## The Bridge

Two! I defy anyone to point me to opening credits for a TV drama series more grippingly atmospheric than those for the Nordic noir series *The Bridge*.

*Hollow Talk*, by the *Choir of Young Believers*, is hauntingly beautiful and the nighttime shots of the Øresund Bridge, which links Copenhagen with the Swedish city of Malmö, are starkly alluring.

(If you don't know what I mean google now).

This is the polar opposite to the carefree jollity of *Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen* (as sung by Danny Kaye, as Hans Christian Andersen, in the 1952 Hollywood musical of the same name).

And while there is nothing to suggest a *Friendly old girl of a town* in *The Bridge*, it does create an image of Copenhagen that is thrillingly enticing.

## Copenhagen at Christmas

And three? OK, it was during December, when the Christmas markets and festive lighting goes a long way to add sparkle to the city.

And having thoroughly enjoyed our short city break in Copenhagen at Christmas time, I can attest to this being a fine time to visit.

Yes, one has to be prepared to wrap up well and carry an umbrella just in case. And yes it gets dark earlier.

But that is, in reality, the allure at this time of year. And, with there being fewer visitors, which is not a bad thing when looking to get to know a place.

## Much to do 'off season'

The Danish capital also has much to enjoy 'inside', including the royal palaces, museums and art galleries.

The covered market at Torvehallerne is a really enjoyable place to visit, whatever the weather, and there are a range of excellent coffee shops, bars and restaurants, particularly in and around the Nyhavn district.

These emit a particularly warm and alluring glow on cold days and evenings and offer alfresco seating with rugs for the knees and overhead or flame heaters for the rest of the body.

The hot chocolate or *glögg*, at such times, is most welcome.

And so absolutely no regrets for choosing winter for the first visit to Copenhagen.

This first visit to Copenhagen has also made us determined to return, although we will probably opt for late spring next time to experience the other side of city.

## An illustrious past

Copenhagen's claim of pre-eminence among the Scandinavian countries is based on its status as a major trading hub through the centuries.

The area, where the city now stands, was a thriving Viking settlement in the 10th Century and became the Danish capital in the 15th Century.

Since that time the city has and reinforced its status as a political, trading and economic powerhouse and a centre of culture and heritage.

The Danish monarchy is one of the world's oldest, and most accessible, with Queen Margrethe II, her heir apparent the Crown Prince

Frederik and his family are regularly seen 'out and about' without formality.

They are hugely popular among Danes with the royal castles major tourist attractions.

## The Copenhagen Card

When visiting a new city, we will always check if there is a VIP card or such like that offers discounts and incentives to visitors.

And we also look to sort out a guided tour to get an understanding and orientation of the place.

The Copenhagen Card is an excellent initiative providing unlimited free travel on trains, busses the metro throughout the entire capital region, including to and from the airport.

The card also gives free entrance to 86 city museums and attractions and castles in and around Copenhagen and a canal cruise.

Visiting the really good Copenhagen Card website is also a great way to plan a trip.

[www.copenhagencard.com](http://www.copenhagencard.com)



## The Little Mermaid



*The Little Mermaid* at Langelinje Pier was first put into place in 1913 and quickly became one of the city icons and it most photographed.

The bronze sculpture on granite and was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale about a mermaid who gives up everything to be united with a young, handsome prince on land.

Every morning and evening she swims to the surface, from the bottom of the sea, and sits on her rock staring longingly towards the shore for a glimpse of her beloved prince.

*The Little Mermaid* was a gift to the city from Danish brewer Carl Jacobsen who became enamoured with the character after watching a ballet performance based on the fairy tale at the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen.

Those travelling to Copenhagen harbour to get a view of it should remember it is 'life sized', and the little in its title is not inaccurate.



## All friends together on Hey Captain's canal tour

With Copenhagen built on a number of islands it made sense to look for a water based tour of the city, and the guys at *Hey Captain* came very highly recommended.

Casper Junge and Joel Madsen saw the potential for their canal boat tours thanks to the many requests from friends to get a trip around the city aboard their boat *Iana*.

*Hey Captain* was set up, with one boat, and now has 10 vessels and a team of excellent guides.

*Hey Captain* has been a success because Casper and Joel focus on an '*all friend's together*' approach with guests.

The boats hold just 12, so those onboard quickly get to know each other.

Each tour is also geared to what passengers want, while taking in the city's main sites, and will be as informative or as laid back as required.

This was perfect for us journalists, as we got to ask Viktor, our 'captain', all about the city, its people and what we really must take in.

And we got a real sense of Copenhagen and its layout at the start of our visit.

*Hey Captain* operates from March to Christmas and, being December, we took the *Glögg Tour* which came with jugs of the truly delicious Danish drink of hot wine and spices.

[www.heycaptain.dk](http://www.heycaptain.dk)



### Nyhavn is the first port of call

Having taken the tour and got our bearings, we, like most visitors, headed for the quayside at Nyhavn, whose brightly coloured buildings provide one of those seminal travel images.

Nyhavn was once a thriving commercial port of call for trading vessels from around the world.

The sailors from these ships would seek solace from the alehouses, and with the 'ladies of pleasure', that plied their trade here.

In more recent times the old quayside houses have been renovated and provide the bars and restaurants that now dominate the old port area.

The place is a veritable magnet for locals and visitors alike.

Whatever the season, visitors will find a laid back atmosphere, an excellent choice of food, wine and beer and the likelihood of live music by the water.



The other thing to embrace with relish in Copenhagen is 'street food'.

I was introduced to street food some years ago in the Indian city of Ahmedabad, and while the experience was unique, and deliciously spicy, the consequences were perhaps to be expected.

No such problem with street food in the Danish capital, which is quality fare and part of the *New Nordic dining* concept.

It is focused on organic, sustainable and local products, and gaining international appeal.

While many city restaurants have menus based on the *New Nordic dining* so do the traders



## Tørvehallerne

My favourite is Torvehallerne, which has some 60 stands selling fresh fish and meat along with breads, chocolate and spices and the chance to have something to eat and a coffee or beer.

This is a real local's place, which makes it all the more enjoyable for us visitors. Ann and I got to take in **Torvehallerne** early on a dank December morning and it absolutely brightened up our day.

## Tivoli Food Hall

Tivoli Gardens has a food hall with stalls offering baked goods, classic burgers and grills.

[www.tivoligardens.com/en](http://www.tivoligardens.com/en)

Rebel Food

Rebel Food is a caravan of food trucks that tours the city from organisers whose aim is to *bring tasty and diverse dishes from all over the world to the mouths of the always gastro-curious Copenhagener*.

Hija de Sanchez

Over 70 European food experts selected Hija de Sanchez, a Mexican street food van, as serving the best Mexican street food.

[www.hijadesanchez.dk](http://www.hijadesanchez.dk)

## The Bridge Street Kitchen

The Bridge Street Kitchen in Greenlandic Trade Square is open from April to Christmas and some of the city's most popular street food traders are found here.

[www.thebridgestreetkitchen.com](http://www.thebridgestreetkitchen.com)

## Reffen

Reffen (Copenhagen Streetfood area), which is also currently seasonal, is expanding its indoor area and is definitely worth checking out.

[www.reffen.dk/en/](http://www.reffen.dk/en/)



## Cosy up at the Copenhagen Christmas markets

The Christmas market, based loosely on the traditional German model, is thriving in towns and cities throughout Europe.

'Bravarian' styled stalls selling Christmas gifts and crafts and a range of festive fare.

It also presents a good reason for a wintertime getting together.

Copenhagen is no exception in this respect with Christmas markets dotted throughout the city.

We found, and enjoyed, a string of three, starting with the Christmas market in Nyhavn quayside.

Visitors to Copenhagen, at whatever time of year, invariably start with Nyhavn.

The old harbour Nyhavn is one of the city's cosiest Christmas markets, which is an appropriate word for the atmosphere as it derives from the Norwegian *kose seg* (to enjoy oneself)

One strolls between a long row of stalls the many bars and restaurants offering 'al fresco' dining under large umbrellas.

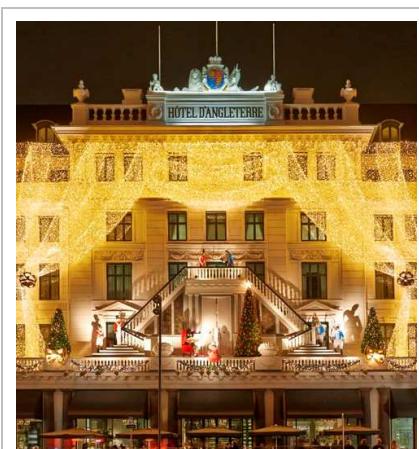
Keeping warm is no problem with blankets, flame heaters and piping hot mulled wine.

It also provided the chance for me to enjoy a beer while Ann browsed the stalls, tasting most of the free samples on offer.

A second Christmas market is to be found just across the road on Kongens Nytorv, and here one can admire the traditional Christmas display onto the facade of the Hotel D'Angleterre.

One can then walk up Strøget, the city's major shopping thoroughfare to Højbro Plads, to reach the third Christmas market in close proximity.

[www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/get-spirit-copenhagens-christmas-markets](http://www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/get-spirit-copenhagens-christmas-markets).





**To say that Tivoli Gardens is a Danish institution is somewhat of an understatement.**

This vintage amusement park and landscaped pleasure gardens, which is found a few minutes walk from City Hall, opened in 1843.

Fairytales writer Hans Christian Andersen visited many times and so too did Walt Disney.

Throughout its time, Tivoli has offered visitors a wide range of attractions in buildings that look to create the feel of the Orient and among delightfully landscaped gardens.

Some of these, including a carousel and merry-go-rounds are serenely nostalgic, with Tivoli's wooden Roller Coaster, from 1914, one of only seven roller coasters worldwide to have a brakeman on board every train.

Other rides are of state of the art and geared to providing the thrills that appeal to the park's younger visitors.

Live shows and concerts are staged in its theatre and after dark the theme park is lit with thousands of light bulbs.

The open-air Plænen stage hosts free rock concerts by Danish bands on a Friday evening during the summer months.

There are all of the dining facilities you would expect in a theme park of this importance.

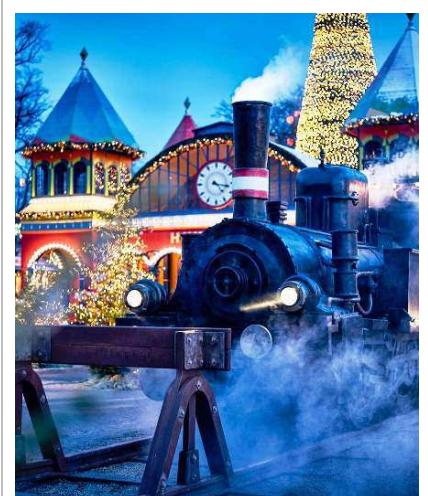
During autumn and winter months Tivoli makes special efforts to reward visitors

In autumn, Tivoli Gardens celebrates Halloween with the introduction of witches, pumpkins and hundreds of lanterns.



Tivoli then 'redresses' in festive fashion for Christmas and New Year and, during February, stages its winter wonderland complete with snowmen, frost crystals and ethereal lighting.

The adjoining Tivoli Food Hall houses some of the city's best street food outlets.



[www.tivoli.dk/en](http://www.tivoli.dk/en)



**The kingdom of Denmark was founded by the Viking kings Gorm the Old and Harald Bluetooth in the 10th century, making the Danish monarchy the oldest in Europe.**

The willingness of its kings, queens and their heirs to adapt to changing times and remain accessible to Danes has secured its position and popularity among citizens.

This royal heritage has maintained the palaces and royal castles open to the public.

### The changing of the guard

It also provides the daily spectacle of the changing of the Royal Danish Guard.

The Guard leaves its barracks at Rosenborg Castle, come rain, shine or snow, at 11.30am and marches through the city to Amalienborg Palace.

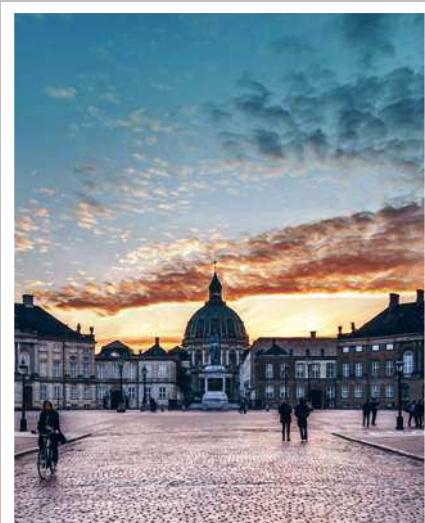
### Rosenborg Castle

Rosenborg Castle stands in the King's Garden in the heart of Copenhagen and was the Danish monarch's formal summer residence.

Built by king Christian IV, in the early 17th century, it houses 400 years of royal art and the Crown Jewels and Royal Regalia.

The grand Knights' Hall is the focal point of any tour with the coronation thrones and three life-size silver lions standing guard.

The tapestries that adorn the walls commemorate battles between Denmark and Sweden.



### Amalienborg Palace

The Amalienborg Palace, located a few kilometres from Rosenborg Castle, was the winter palace.

Being inside the original city walls, it was vacated by the royals come the putrefying summer heat.

Today the palace is the permanent residence of Queen Margrethe 2, the current Danish monarch, and the Crown Prince and his family.

The queen's active role as a theatre costume and set designer are highlighted in displays here along with a series of fully furnished state rooms.

### Christiansborg Palace

Christiansborg Palace was once the home of kings and queens, but after one of several great fires, the royal family moved to Amalienborg Palace in the late 1800's and never returned.

Today the Danish monarch the Danish Queen uses the palace to welcome official delegations and hosts royal banquets.

The Palace also houses the Danish Parliament (Folketinget), the Danish Prime Minister's Office and the Supreme Court of Denmark.

That part of the palace open to the public includes the Royal Reception Rooms, the Palace Chapel and the Royal Stables and the Palace Tower, which is the highest in Copenhagen.

[www.visitcopenhagen.com/traveltrade/copenhagen/castles-and-palaces](http://www.visitcopenhagen.com/traveltrade/copenhagen/castles-and-palaces)



As the Danish capital, and with centuries of cultural heritage behind it, it should come as no surprise to find some of the country's finest museums and art galleries are found in, or near to, Copenhagen.

### Design Museum Danmark

In the time we had in the city, we opted for the Design Museum Danmark. This fascinating museum houses one of the world's largest collections of Danish design, with collections ranging from Art Nouveau to contemporary Danish design and including glass, ceramics, fashion, textile and poster art.

The museum's restaurant offers an excellent place for lunch (see Dining in Copenhagen).

[www.designmuseum.dk/en](http://www.designmuseum.dk/en)

### The National Museum

The National Museum is located in The Prince's Palace, which was built by Nicolai Eigtved between 1744 for Danish Crown Prince Frederik V and Crown Princess Louise.

Visitors to the museum can see a 3,000 year old Sun Chariot, the Bronze Age 'Egtved Girl' and a collection of archaeological finds from the Viking Age onwards.

[www.natmus.dk](http://www.natmus.dk)

### The National Gallery of Denmark

The Statens Museum for Kunst - The National Gallery of Denmark is the country's largest art museum and features Danish and international art from the past seven centuries.

Its collections range from the European classics of the Renaissance to modern and contemporary art, including one of the world's best Matisse collections.

[www.smk.dk/en](http://www.smk.dk/en)

### Den Frie Centre

Den Frie was founded by artists in 1898 and is one of the oldest venues for contemporary art in Denmark.

It is housed in a wooden building designed by the artist J.F. Willumsen and presents the latest in contemporary art with exhibitions by national and international artists.

[www.denfrie.dk/en](http://www.denfrie.dk/en)

### Hirschsprung

Hirschsprung is an art museum displaying Danish art from the 19th and early 20th centuries - the Danish Golden Age.

It is built around the personal art collection of Heinrich Hirschsprung, a tobacco manufacturer, who donated his collection to the Danish state in 1902.

[www.hirschsprung.dk/en](http://www.hirschsprung.dk/en)

### Ordrupgaard

Ordrupgaard, which was built as a private residence with an adjoining art studio, now houses the Ordrupgaard Collections.

One of Northern Europe's finest collections of 19th and 20th century French art, it includes works by Degas, Renoir, Monet, Cézanne, Gauguin, and Matisse.

[www.ordrupgaard.dk/en](http://www.ordrupgaard.dk/en)

### ARKEN Museum of Modern Art

ARKEN, which is located at Køge Bay Beach, south of Copenhagen, has one of Scandinavia's finest collections of contemporary art.

It has more than 400 works including that by British artist Damien Hirst.

[www.uk.arken.dk/visit](http://www.uk.arken.dk/visit)



[www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/sightseeing/cool-art-museums-copenhagen](http://www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/sightseeing/cool-art-museums-copenhagen)



## Sumptuous surprises galore at the Andersen

By Ann Mealor

**The Andersen** is a fun, friendly and stylish boutique hotel situated in the vibrant Vesterbro area of Copenhagen.

It provided us with a very, very warm welcome during the Copenhagen winter.

It is very easy to reach from the airport and the station and close to a great selection of excellent restaurants, bars and quaint cafes.

### Homely touches

I loved the *Andersen*'s quirkiness and homely touches, particularly the huge teddy bears in the lobby (left by a previous guest who couldn't afford their flights home).

Then there were pebble shaped pepper nuts (traditional Christmas biscuits) on reception and the toffees, cookies and water on each landing as a reward for guests who used the stairs.

The hotel offers complimentary teas, coffees and hot chocolate and, best of all, a nightly happy hour in the cosy lounge with a selection of delicious wines, including organic wines, all free of charge.

Our room was brightly decorated in warm rose pinks and soft greys.

All 69 rooms and suites have been decorated with Designers Guild wallpapers, pillows and curtains – there is even a Pillow Menu – you get to choose one best suited to giving you a good night's sleep.

The small fridge was a bonus and the high quality Molton Brown toiletries were a really welcome surprise.



A complimentary smart phone in the room gave us free local and international calls and wifi access and an on-the-go hotel concierge service.

The hotel is very 'green' and committed to the environment.

### Breakfast

Breakfast was delicious and it was all organic.

A selection of pastries, cold meats, cheeses, boiled eggs (you could cook your own), fresh fruit, smoked salmon, cereals, porridge, crusty bread and a few hot options.

There was enough to choose from to keep us going until the evening.

The *Andersen*'s little treats and surprises along with its very welcoming and helpful staff make this an ideal base for exploring Copenhagen.

Oh, another little surprise - a rubber ducky in the bathroom for you to take home.



[www.andersen-hotel.dk/en](http://www.andersen-hotel.dk/en)



Uformel

By Ann Mealor

In addition to the 'street food' markets and stands, Copenhagen has a wide range of excellent fine dining options, with the emphasis on relaxed sophistication.

Of these we can recommend *Uformel* and *Café Klint* in the Denmark Design Museum

## Uformel

*Uformel* is a smart, chic, candlelit restaurant buzzing with atmosphere. The chit-chat of diners fills the air along with the clinking of glasses, the popping of corks and the scraping of plates.

The place was full when we arrived and we were swiftly shown to our reserved table.

We tucked into warm, crusty bread whilst we browsed the menu.

Many of the ingredients used are provided by Danish farmers, but some of the speciality products are sourced from across the world.

Every meal created depends on the season and the mood in the kitchen.

We went for the four-course *Uformel Experience* with wine pairings.

This started with the ceviche of cod with cream cheese, chili and ginger followed by the tartar of Danish beef with roasted kale and crisp cheese.

The ceviche was refreshing and tangy and the beef moist and full of flavour.

Then came the succulent grilled mallard with wild cress and Sichuan pepper and lastly, the luscious dark chocolate with sorbet of quinces and roasted sourdough.

The four courses complimented each other beautifully providing a luxurious mix of flavours, textures and colours.



Café Klint

The wine pairings of Mosel Riesling, Brouilly Beaujolais, Sangiovese Rosso di Montalcino and the Clos Lapeyre Jurancen Moelleux worked extremely well with the food.

If you are looking for fine dining in a relaxed, but vibrant and professional setting, *Uformel* is the place to go.

[www.uformel.dk](http://www.uformel.dk)

## Café Klint

Light, airy and modern, *Café Klint* in The Denmark Design Museum is a great place to stop for lunch and refuel after a morning's sight-seeing.

All the food is made with organic ingredients and includes traditional Danish open sandwiches, hot meals, wine and freshly roasted coffee.

The menu is updated regularly and based on seasonal produce.

The open sandwiches, very appropriately, are like little works of art.

A dense slice of nutty, brown bread is intricately decorated with a selection of toppings.

These include prawns, smoked salmon, cauliflower, dill and almond; and pan-fried herring, dill, beetroot, almond and mustard.

Two per person is recommended and there is plenty to choose from.

I also had a silky smooth carrot, pumpkin, cream, olive oil and chives soup – just the thing to warm you up on a drizzly, rather dank day. It was delicious.

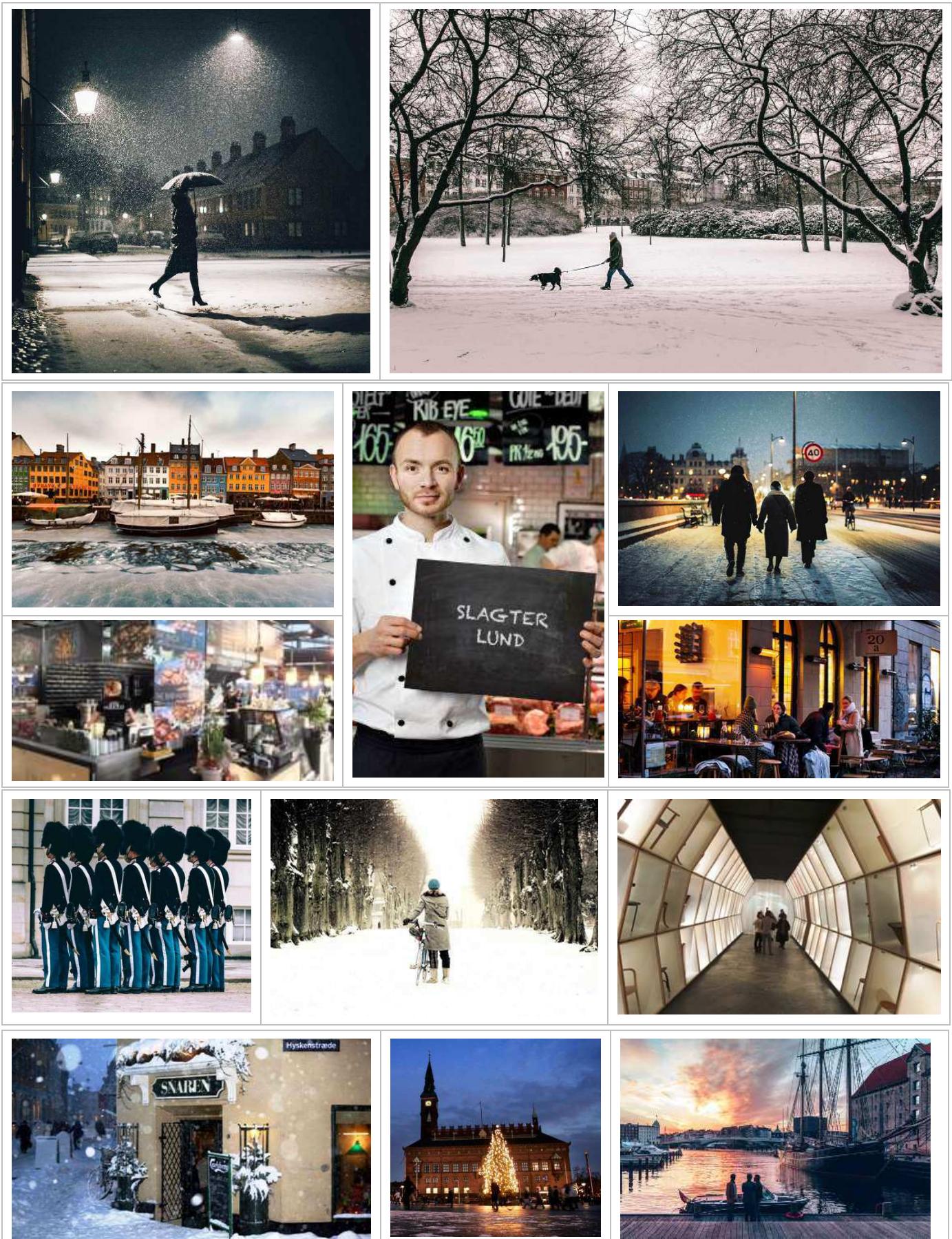
I also drank my best cup of Earl Grey tea here – boiling hot water, organic tea bag and proper milk.

The staff are friendly, helpful and very knowledgeable about the ingredients used in all the dishes.

You don't have to go to the museum to access the café, although combining the two makes for a very enjoyable afternoon out – especially if you are looking to keep out of the rain.

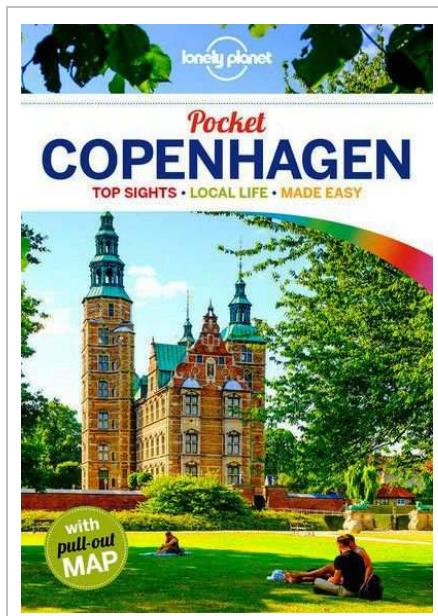
[www.designmuseum.dk/en/besog-os/cafe/](http://www.designmuseum.dk/en/besog-os/cafe/)

## A snapshot of Copenhagen in winter





The Lonely Planet Pocket Guide to Copenhagen is an invaluable, handy-size, guide to the city.



It splits the city into easy-to-navigate neighbourhoods and then tackles essential visitor information including :

- walks
- food
- places of interest
- night time entertainment, and
- shopping.

### Copenhagen is #1 city

Copenhagen tops Lonely Planet's Best in Travel. Lonely Planet has chosen Copenhagen as its #1 city (in the world) to visit in 2019.

It describes Copenhagen as the epitome of Scandi cool and a city that has become a culinary powerhouse.

The Danish capital claims no less than 15 Michelin-starred restaurants, more than any other Scandinavian capital.

From Viking treasures in a former prince's palace to iconic Danish chairs in a one-time baroque hospital, Copenhagen's cultural offerings are rich and eclectic.

Each year, Lonely Planet's *Best in Travel* lists start with nominations from the publisher's community of editors, researchers and locals and are ranked by a panel of judges.

The outcome is an eclectic list of destinations with unique, compelling or topical reasons to visit in the year ahead.

Lonely Planet's *Best in Travel* book is now in its 14th edition.

[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)  
[www.lonelyplanet.com/best-in-travel](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/best-in-travel)

## AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



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[www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)



**The International Travel Writers Alliance** is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

[www.itwalliance.com](http://www.itwalliance.com)



**Ann Mealor** is a professional travel writer and photographer and Managing Editor of *AllWays traveller*



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