

JUTLAND

Denmark is in two parts—Jutland, which is a large peninsula on the west, and innumerable islands in the east. The capital, Copenhagen, sits on two of these islands (Zealand and Amager) and is linked by ‘the bridge’ to Malmo, in Sweden. Jutland is attached to Germany in the south, and is bounded on the west by the North Sea, and on the east by the Baltic. Many more people visit the islands than visit Jutland, which nonetheless has much to recommend it.

More or less in the centre of Jutland is the small town of Billund, which has two claims to fame: an international airport and ‘Legoland’. The two are, of course, related, as many people fly in, spend a day or two in Legoland, and fly out again. From the UK, BA flies into Billund from Heathrow, and Ryanair from Stansted.

Lego was originally designed, in Denmark, as an aid to architects, but it rapidly became a construction toy for children, popular all over the world. There are ‘Legoland’ theme parks in several countries, including England, but the one in Denmark is reputed to be the best. It features two very different things—theme park



A huge spider—made entirely of Lego

‘rides’ and similar attractions, and models made out of Lego. The rides include roller coasters, various types of boat ride, and a few ‘shows’—very similar fare to what you would find in any theme park. The Lego models, however, are amazing. About twenty places in or around Denmark have been modelled, with buildings, roads and waterways, together with moving cars and lorries, trains and boats. The level of detail and the sheer number of models is striking. There are also one or two larger Lego sculptures, such as the Statue of Liberty, the US Capitol building, Mount Rushmore, and the spider (illustrated). There are also some ‘themed’ displays, such as a series from the ‘Star Wars’ movies. I was expecting Legoland to be mainly for children, but I think many adults would appreciate it even more!

Not far from Legoland is another ‘gem’. Jelling is little more than a village, but it is the historic home of the Viking kings. Unfortunately, Hollywood has given us a very distorted view of the Vikings—they never wore horned helmets, and although they did their fair share of attacking and plundering small communities, they also had a



A stone carved with runes

huge trade network, extending into Russia and the Middle East. They colonised Iceland and Greenland, and explored as far as North America. Their artwork was beautiful, both in the form of carved 'rune' stones and in exquisite jewellery. And all this was based on Jelling. The archaeological site features two huge burial mounds, with a church between them. The National Museum of Denmark has built a beautiful new museum on the site, with many innovative visual aids, and a lot of 'hands on' exhibits. Biographies are supplied of all the Viking kings, including Canute (Cnut) the Great, whose name is linked (possibly erroneously) with Bosham. Best of all, the museum is free!

A major attraction when visiting Australia is walking over the top of Sydney Harbour Bridge. A similar walk is available on a bridge joining Jutland to the island of Funen, at the charmingly named town of Middelfart! The climb in Denmark is not nearly as high as the one in Australia (60m as opposed to 134m), but it is also considerably cheaper (£30 instead of over £100)! Recommended, so long as you don't have a fear of heights!

Jutland is mainly agricultural, and like most of Denmark it is almost flat, making it a good place for cycling. There are one or two larger cities on Jutland, notably Aarhus, Esbjerg, Aalborg and Kolding, but most people visit for the peaceful countryside and the attractions I have described. On the downside, prices are somewhat higher than in the UK, and although there are lovely beaches, the water is rather cold, with



On top of the bridge

(this year, at least) quite a few jellyfish—mostly harmless, but one or two can sting! So, if you fancy a pleasant interlude only a short flight away, think about flying to Billund, and enjoying Jutland.

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