

What are the Danes like?

A Dane could be described as an informal, humorous and friendly person with an easygoing attitude and a great need for 'creating cosiness'. But do not be mistaken. When it comes to business, Danes are professional and straight to the point.

An easygoing attitude

Common to all Danes is the tendency to take ups and downs with a touch of irony, often self-irony. For foreigners it sometimes seems confusing what Danes really mean when they tend to say the opposite of what they think. This irony supports the Danes' sense of humour and the relaxed way of speaking to each other. Even between managers and employees an informal friendly tone and mutual respect is dominant. The informal way of life is also shown in the way everyone in Denmark is addressed by the informal "du" (you) and called by their first name.

The Danish business culture

When you first get to know the Danish business culture, most will find it informal, direct and open. Even if Danish business people appear somewhat formal at first they quickly show a more informal and relaxed side of themselves, just as the dress code sometimes seems a little relaxed to a foreign businessperson. However, Danish businesspeople are likely to get down to business right away and are generally conservative and efficient in their approach to business meetings. Foreign companies often praise these qualities of going 'straight to the point' and "thinking out of the box". These aspects of independent thinking and acting are considered to be something very Danish.

A good advice when doing business with Danes is; do not be late for appointments and remember the handshake as the formal way of greeting.

Cosiness is part of being Dane

To Danes cosiness is a very essential word and achieved in different ways: it is a feeling of something or someone being very pleasant and it can be situations, people and places. Both summer- and wintertime have their moments of true cosiness.

When it is summer in Denmark everyone pours outside to bask in the summer sun. Many Danes lead active lives, going to parks and playing sports after work. The cafés overflow with customers and you can see quite a lot of people enjoying a cold draught beer in the sun.

Many Danes spend time relaxing in their summerhouses near the sea, and if you pass by in the evening you can see people enjoying the long and bright summer nights barbecuing in the garden.

In complete contrast, once winter arrives, the days are short and cold. Danes light candles around the house to create a cosy atmosphere. Danes like to spend time indoors and they often gather friends and family for a nice dinner or a cup of coffee. In the end of December when the snow (sometimes) falls the Danes celebrate Christmas. This is an important time of the year when families meet for traditional Danish Christmas and sing Christmas carols while dancing around the candle lighted and decorated Christmas tree.

A good place to live

According to IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2006, Denmark ranks second in the EU, only surpassed by Austria, when it comes to quality of life because it offers:

- A high job quality: Danish colleagues are team players, career opportunities for women are good and Danish work places respect family life.
- A high quality of living: A positive balance between family and work, no need to spend many hours in traffic and public service is efficient.
- A safe and sound environment: Personal safety is high and pollution low.
- Good recreational options such as restaurants, sports facilities and theatres.