

THE INTERNATIONAL

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HUMMINGBIRD CAKE



YEARLY TRADITIONS



RESOLUTION-FREE JANUARY



WORLD BRAILLE DAY

JANUARY 2025 - WWW.THE-INTL.COM



**REDEFINING GLOBAL CAREERS:
JANNIE'S INSPIRING INTERNATIONAL JOURNEY.**



EMBRACING THE ENERGY OF A NEW YEAR!

WELCOME TO A BRAND-NEW YEAR - 365 UNCHARTED DAYS BRIMMING WITH POTENTIAL, UNCERTAINTY, AND PROMISE.

DEAR READERS

As the calendar flips, many of us tend to focus on resolutions, goals, and plans that promise transformation. Yet this year, let's pause and consider a different approach.

Instead of the usual "New Year, New Me" mantra, what if we leaned into something deeper? What if we allowed the new year to be less about reinvention and more about recognition - not about fixing ourselves, but about uncovering and celebrating the best of who we already are?

THE POWER OF THE PAUSE

Our lives often feel like they're stuck in fast-forward, where productivity is king and moments of stillness are far too rare. But the new year offers an opportunity to pause, to breathe, and to ask the kinds of questions we're often too busy to entertain:

- What energised/drained me in the past year?
- Where did I feel most alive?
- What's been quietly calling for my attention that I've been too preoccupied to hear?

Taking the time to pause doesn't mean stopping progress. It means taking stock, making space, and honouring the present before we rush into the future. In doing so, we focus on what truly matters.

PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

New Year's resolutions often feel heavy: the notion that we must be thinner, wealthier, more accomplished, or more disciplined to be worthy. But what if we let go of that pressure? What if we approached change with curiosity instead of criticism?

Progress doesn't require perfection. It requires consistency, patience, and a willingness to embrace missteps as part of the process. This year, instead of demanding perfection from yourself, celebrate small wins. Each effort, no matter how small, adds up. Give yourself the grace to grow without judgment.

LEAN INTO YOUR VALUES

Before chasing goals, ask yourself: do these aspirations align with my values? Or are they borrowed from societal expectations, peer comparisons, or the never-ending scroll of social media?

A life well-lived is built on a foundation of values. Perhaps this is the year to nurture relationships that have taken a backseat. Maybe creativity lights you up, and it's time to give yourself permission to paint, write, or

dream without worrying about "results." Or it might be that courage is your guiding light, and this is the year to take risks, speak your truth, or pursue something that both scares and excites you.

Clarity around your values turns vague resolutions into meaningful intentions. And intentions, grounded in what truly matters, have the power to sustain us even when the initial excitement fades.

EMBRACE THE UNEXPECTED

There's a quiet truth about New Year's planning that we rarely admit: most of what shapes a year is beyond our control. Life has a way of surprising us with detours, challenges, and gifts we couldn't predict.

Rather than clinging tightly to specific outcomes, consider adopting a spirit of adaptability. When plans don't unfold as you'd imagined, embrace it. When opportunities appear, meet them with openness. A resilient mindset sees change not as an interruption but as an invitation to grow.

A MILESTONE YEAR FOR US

As you step into this new year, we invite you to join us in a moment of celebration. This marks the 7th year of The International—seven years of stories, connections, and community. We're deeply grateful for you, our readers, who have supported us on this incredible journey. Remember that you don't need a new year to be a new you. This year isn't about becoming someone different; it's about becoming more fully yourself.

Our 7th birthday as a publication inspires us to continue our meaningful conversations and bring diverse perspectives to light as internationals in Denmark. Here's to celebrating the past, embracing the present, and stepping boldly into the future - together.

Love,

Lyndsay

EDITOR & FOUNDER

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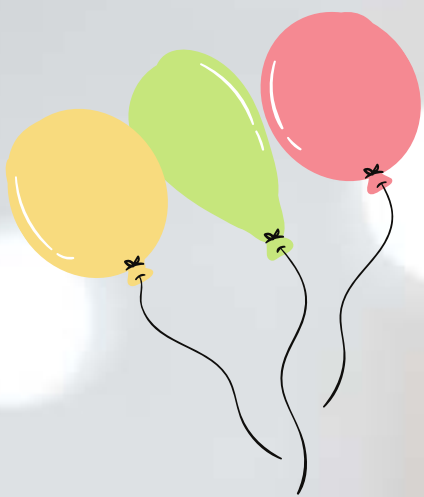
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HAPPY 7TH



Birthday to



I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF NETWORKING



JANNIE AASTED SKOV-HANSEN, BASED IN COPENHAGEN, LIVED FOR SEVEN YEARS IN ASIA. TODAY, SHE NAVIGATES AND ADVANCES OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCOMPANYING PARTNERS TO KEEP THEIR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY ABROAD.

PHOTOGRAPHS [CÉLINE MARTIN-PEDERSEN](#) / JANNIE AASTED SKOV-HANSEN TEXT NATALIA SEPITKOVA

JANNIE'S STORY IS unique yet similar to the life journeys of internationals in Denmark. It is not only inspiring but also addresses issues that many internationals encounter after arriving in the country. Despite being Danish, Jannie experienced firsthand what life is like in a foreign country and the challenges that internationals face at the beginning of their journey. After arriving in Denmark, she chose to assist foreigners in navigating their new environment.

Jannie studied Organisation Psychology and Danish studies at Roskilde University and had her first child, Linus, during her studies when she was 26 years old. At that time, her husband (also a Dane) was offered a job in Nepal, and they decided to take the leap and move to the southern part of Nepal to do development work. She continued her studies long distances and pursued opportunities to develop professionally, including interning at UNICEF and working part-time in a consulting company. "When in Nepal, we had our daughter, Malika. We came back to Denmark in 2007, and I wrote my thesis alongside working part-time for Novo Nordisk in international HR on a global project," Jannie says. "Just after having my third child, Sophia, my husband Thomas again asked me if I was ready for yet another adventure: A new expatriation to Central Asia. I had never heard of Kyrgyzstan, and it took me a little while to say YES to

this opportunity. Eventually, I quit my job, and we moved together as a family of five. And I never regretted my decision to move to this wonderful place, full of lovely people and beautiful nature."

Jannie raised her children in an environment and culture that was diametrically different from the one she was used to in Denmark. How did she cope with it? "I cherish the time I spent with all my children and that I could be attentive and present with them during their early years," she admits. "We were lucky to have nannies in Nepal and Kyrgyzstan, which allowed me to fill my cup with activities outside the home. If I were to point out one challenge, it would be the health care and support that was somehow different from those in Denmark. Still, this would never outweigh the immense joy it has been for all of our three children to experience living in a new country. Being part of an international community is a wonderful experience, and we still keep in contact with Nepalese and Kyrgyz friends today."

LIFE IN NEPAL AND KYRGYZSTAN

Although she boldly decided to follow her husband to Asia twice, which also meant starting from scratch in a foreign country, with every move, she had initial plans for her



professional development. At the same time, she also remained open to new opportunities. “I truly believe in the power of networking, being curious and finding meaningful ways to engage locally. In Nepal, I learned the language and was given the opportunity to work part-time on communication projects. In Kyrgyzstan, I got the same opportunity, and my feeling of identity loss decreased because I had something ‘to put on my business card,’” Jannie says.

During her adventure abroad, she got a brilliant mix of experiences because she had been quite strategic in developing herself. She had learned the Russian language to a basic level, worked for the NGO DanChurchAid, taught at a university and was Chair of the Board at an international school. In addition to her career, she also developed her inner life. “I liked the more soulful, religious aspects of both countries. I explored yoga in both places and stayed balanced and playful because of the many inspiring and supportive people I met.” Jannie also confirms that life and culture in Central and South Asia differed from Denmark’s. “And I enjoyed the more fluid ways of interacting socially. When living abroad, we are not bound by our calendars and traditional activities during the year in the same way. We got to spend Christmas and New Year skiing with friends. We travelled and basically became closer as a family.” But, in general, she thinks we all share the passion for creating meaning and doing the best for our family. It doesn’t matter what part of the world we come from.

EXPATS’ DUAL CAREERS

Despite all that, she was anxious about her job and future career in Kyrgyzstan. She was aware of the problem many internationals face when they move with their partner abroad, even though they give up their well-established careers back home. “This is how I got the idea to create Here We Are Global in 2016,” explains Jannie. “With my recruitment know-how, my lived experience and inspiration from a range of inspiring people crossing my path, I ventured out to design a new solution to the dual career challenge: Companies face difficulties in sending employees abroad when the partner also has a work life that matters to them. Instead, we talk about the dual career opportunity: That we can find meaningful engagement and grow our skills and competencies – also when a paid job is not possible right away.”

For accompanying partners, for example, this means they can develop their skills through learning new languages or requalification of their education. Volunteer work also can contribute positively and sustain a professional identity while abroad. Jannie supports and helps advance opportunities. “With Here We Are Global, we offer online inspiration, 1:1 support and workshops for travelling partners and dual-career couples.

We have developed the Here We Are Competency Matrix as a resource for anyone to see their global career from a fresh perspective. When a job is not possible, we can still expand personally and professionally. We can create projects, develop network groups and events and make an impact. With our community, we are that global backing group you sometimes need when you feel lost in transition. So, the mix of career advice and existential psychology is what makes our solutions holistic and unique.”

Jannie also co-authored a book with Paul Vanderbroeck - *Here We Are: The International Career Couple Handbook*, which is for international career couples who wish to create a strategy for a meaningful life together. The word together is significant because the decision to start a new life in a foreign country should always be the decision of both partners. And it’s important to talk about it together, especially when both partners have professional careers. The book guides you to carefully consider your values, dreams and non-negotiables so you can say yes or no to new opportunities.

HOW IS IT IN DENMARK?

Is Denmark helping enough expats’ spouses? I asked Jannie. “I certainly see improvements in how, e.g., companies and Danish municipalities now pay much more attention to the well-being of families. Many small entrepreneurs have their heart in supporting internationals and families. I truly wish to see even stronger collaboration between established organisations and the brilliant people who work tirelessly to put dual careers and the well-being of internationals on the agenda and create solutions for the actual pain that many expat partners face when they are not able to pursue their purpose in life in a new country. I believe in the mix of support and a person’s initiative to create meaningful lives on the move.”

Jannie has seen numerous people succeed and find their way in Denmark because they actively chose to stay curious and bring their skills into play. They received rejections

“IT TOOK TIME FOR ME TO ADJUST TO THE SOCIAL LIFE IN DENMARK AGAIN AND REESTABLISH A CONNECTION TO MY FRIENDS. YOU, OF COURSE, BECOME A BIT OUT OF MIND WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN OUT OF SIGHT FOR MANY YEARS. BEING A “REPAT” IS INDEED THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF MOVING INTERNATIONALLY.”





IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING THE BOOK HERE WE ARE: THE RELATIONAL CAREER COUPLE HANDBOOK OR LEARNING MORE ABOUT JANNIE'S COMPANY, VISIT HER WEBSITE: WWW.HEREWEAREGLOBAL.COM

and had disappointing experiences in the job-seeking process. Yet, they persevered and crafted their own story of making it into a Danish job market that is not easy to navigate. “My advice would be to connect and show that you are trusted already by someone in your new country. Engage and contribute and do things that you love to do. While applying for jobs, engage yourself and have people vouch for you. This is often when opportunities occur, and life takes interesting turns.”

HIDDEN MIGRANT

During the interview with Jannie, we also discussed another topic that is no less important for those who decide to live outside their homeland. Some fully integrate into a foreign country, acquire citizenship of that country and never return home. However, some return to their homeland after a few years of living abroad. “There is a phenomenon called hidden migrant. When coming back to your home country, you tend to see your own culture with fresh eyes and start to wonder why we do things as we do,” explains Jannie, who came back to Denmark in 2016 and was lucky to get a job in the same company she was working before her journey abroad.

“It took time for me to adjust to the social life in Denmark again and reestablish a connection to my friends. You, of course, become a bit out of mind when you have been out of sight for many years. Being a “Repat” is indeed the most challenging part of moving internationally. Mostly because we do not prepare for it. We think it is like driving your car into the garage. But it also takes a lot of effort and energy for the entire family.”

JANNIE'S PORTFOLIO CAREER

In 2020, she decided to become an independent consultant and pursue her passion for developing Here We Are Global. She also conducted leadership development and took the first steps toward becoming a change management instructor. During the pandemic, she accepted an exciting job offer: to be the Project Manager for establishing the first public international school in Maribo, Lolland, which opened its doors in 2021.

At the beginning of 2022, she started full-time doing change management training and coaching of leaders and talents. “I run a portfolio career and enjoy creating value in different arenas. With Kamp & Co., I support leaders, employees and teams to grow through a strength-based approach. This gives me immense joy, coaching people and growing a new company with my very experienced and wise colleagues, Morten and Camilla. I also do online and physical training in change management and consult on projects within HR, organisational development and change leadership,” she describes her current work.

“With Globally Local, I am specifically helping with a new project: establishing the next public international school in Kalundborg with Thomas Mulhern and his great team. The mix of international and local students in a bi-lingual school is a fantastic way to help international integration into Danish society. The challenge is often to feel settled enough to stay in Denmark. More bi-lingual schools might help with this.” **THE-INTL**



NEW YEAR, NEW CAREER? IS IT TIME FOR A CHANGE?

PHOTOGRAPHS UNSPLASH TEXT LESLEA PETERSEN



THE GREAT THING about a new year is the endless possibilities it can bring as you say goodbye to 2024 and embrace 2025 as a fresh start. ‘New Year, new you’ is a cliché, but does it resonate?

LIFE TAKES UNEXPECTED TURNS

Life doesn’t always go the way you had planned. Your role might have been recently made redundant or you have been in the same job for years but feel unfulfilled.

In 2018, an unexpected redundancy brought me back to the job market. This gave me time to reassess what I wanted to do next in my career, so I invested in some coaching. This gave me insight into an area where I could help others, use my transferable skills, and share what I had learned as a job seeker. Ultimately, English Job Denmark was born.

I have never loved a job more, and yet, I couldn’t do what I do now without having gone through my career journey in Denmark. All those difficult experiences can prepare you for change—and change for good!

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS IN YOUR JOB THAT IT’S TIME FOR A NEW START?

Your company isn’t investing in you—there’s no training or upskilling, yet you see others being given the opportunity.

You are generally bored. I need to love what I write about, and some of my experiences have had me yawning throughout the day.

You feel drained after a day’s work and unfulfilled in your role.

If you don’t like or respect your boss, it can be challenging to stay motivated when you are on their team.

You feel sick to your stomach on a Monday morning and dread going to work. There is nothing worse—I have been there and lived through it.

You are ambitious and want to grow, but there is no career progression.

As an international, you feel excluded as your colleagues switch to Danish, and you don’t feel confident in the language yet.

And the worst one still, your physical or mental health is suffering.

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE HITS A NERVE, THEN WHAT CAN YOU DO NEXT?

What is your motivation? What do you enjoy, if anything, in your current role? What skills can you transfer into a new role?

Start with recognising what is your dream job? List your current skills and what satisfies you. Research any of the transferable skills and what type of role would include them? Then, ask people you know in that field or research the job type on LinkedIn and see who is doing it now to gain a clearer picture of the role and if this is indeed what you are aiming for. This will take time and a lot of research.

Having a clearer picture of the role, you can then set some clear goals.

1. Give yourself a timeline for pivoting your career. You will need to ‘rebrand’ yourself on LinkedIn and in your job applications.
2. Where can you upskill, or what courses can you do to bolster your profile?
3. What can you highlight from your previous career on your LinkedIn profile? Go through your experience and minimise what is no longer relevant, but develop key expertise and knowledge that will help build your new profile.
4. Explain your ‘why’ for shifting career and explain what you can bring to the new role and what the company can gain by hiring you.
5. Once you feel confident in your new LinkedIn profile and rebranded CV, get your elevator pitch ready.

You can now network with confidence and reach out to organisations that will be a great fit.

Changing your career requires not only courage but also time and, sometimes, coaching. You are not a new graduate, and in Denmark, you can’t start at the bottom and work your way up.

You have so much to offer and hone your profile to reflect this. Why not start 2025 in a career that brings fulfilment? It is worth the effort, I can assure you! **THE-INTL**



LESLEA PETERSEN
CEO OF ENGLISH
JOB DENMARK

Leslea Petersen is the CEO of English Job Denmark, an organization dedicated to coaching professionals and businesses in retaining international talent. Originally from Britain, Leslea moved to Denmark 16 years ago, marrying into Viking heritage. With over 20 years of communications experience in both business and not-for-profit sectors, she brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her role. Leslea is deeply passionate about helping organisations navigate the complexities of international recruitment and fostering a diverse workplace. Her commitment to excellence has made her a prominent figure in the Danish job market.

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WORLD BRAILLE DAY: SUPPORTING THE BLIND COMMUNITY IN DENMARK.

PHOTOGRAPHS **IBOS FB PAGE** TEXT **ANNA PAWLOWICZ**

THE 4TH OF January 2025 is World Braille Day, an occasion celebrated by the blind community and a reminder of the importance of Braille as a communication tool for people who are blind or on the blindness spectrum.

In this issue, we're featuring the work of the National Institute for Visual Impairment (IBOS) and the Danish Braille Board. In a conversation with Marie Fasmer, Head of IBOS, and Tina Thøgersen, Study Advisor at IBOS, a member of the Danish Braille Board, and part of the user group herself as she is blind, we explore the support available for the blind community in Denmark and the ongoing relevance of Braille in an increasingly digital world.

A LEGACY OF INCLUSION

With approximately 15,000 people across Denmark living with some form of visual impairment, IBOS plays a crucial role in supporting blind individuals. From skills development to community integration, their mission is clear: to ensure that blind and visually impaired individuals have the tools to live independent, fulfilling lives.

According to Marie Fasmer, IBOS has a history of over 165 years and is one of Denmark's key specialised institutions dedicated to supporting the blind community. Today, IBOS works as a bridge between that community and the wider public, helping individuals integrate into Danish society while also serving as a resource hub for professionals in the field.

In Marie's words, "Our work at IBOS covers a variety of needs. We assist people who have recently lost their sight to develop everyday skills. We also support lifelong blind individuals, as well as those with residual vision, to succeed academically and professionally."

While the blind community in Denmark may be small, its diversity is significant. As Tina Thøgersen explains, "We're all different. Whether you have a visual impairment or complete blindness, the support you receive must reflect your needs and the wish-



es you have for your life."

Marie Fasmer adds that different life stages require a specific approach to assistance. Studying, starting a family, or adjusting to a new workplace all present particular challenges, which IBOS recognises and embraces for the community it serves.

A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

A unique feature of IBOS, and one that Marie is especially proud of, is its role in training professionals who work with blind individuals across Denmark. The institute has developed a specialised educational program to train teachers, therapists, and other professionals in this field. This ensures nationwide access to well-trained specialists who understand the unique needs that come with blindness.

ACCESSIBLE VOTING

Another area both Marie and Tina highlighted with pride was the strides made in ensuring equal participation in voting. A recent success story is the development of accessible voting ballots for referendums requiring a "yes" or "no" response. Tailored templates with Braille printed on them allow blind voters to cast their ballots independently - an experience which Tina describes as empower-

ing: "Developing Braille ballot overlays was a big achievement. It gave a sense of dignity for many members of our community." While more work is needed to make all types of elections fully accessible, this milestone represents significant progress in inclusion.

THE RELEVANCE OF BRAILLE

Given the availability of audiobooks, screen readers, and voice recognition, our conversation with Marie and Tina was also an opportunity to discuss the role of Braille in today's high-tech world.

With confidence in her voice, Tina shared with us that Braille is irreplaceable. "It is not just a method of reading—it is essential for literacy. Braille teaches about the structure of language, spelling, and ways to formulate your thoughts. It equips you with skills that ensure your independence, and it plays a unique role that other assistive technology tools cannot fulfil."

LOOKING AHEAD: A COMMUNITY THAT THRIVES TOGETHER

As Denmark continues its efforts to create a more inclusive society, the work of IBOS and the Danish Braille Board reminds us of the importance of supporting the blind community and changing attitudes toward blindness and disability.

Tina hopes that, with time, members of the blind community, individuals with other disabilities, and non-disabled members of our society will be able to meet on equal terms. In her words, "When we all meet halfway, we realise that our perception of being different isn't exactly right. We all face different challenges, and we all need different resources to thrive."

To create opportunities for meeting on equal terms, IBOS is hosting a permanent assistive technology exhibition, which all of us can visit to learn more about using Braille and other tools for studies, work or leisure. For details, visit IBOS' website. **THE-INTL**


"WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT. WHETHER YOU HAVE A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT OR COMPLETE BLINDNESS, THE SUPPORT YOU RECEIVE MUST REFLECT YOUR NEEDS AND THE WISHES YOU HAVE FOR YOUR LIFE."



ANNA PAWLOWICZ
FOUNDER AND CEO &
CO-FOUNDER OF HUMANKIND

Hailing from Poland and the UK, Anna is the Founder and CEO & co-founder of HumanKind, a consultancy focused on driving disability inclusion in the workplace and in our society. Anna's mission to foster disability inclusion started with the birth of her son, who lives with a physical disability and autism.

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THE POST-HOLIDAY RESET

HOW TO REFUEL YOUR BODY AND MIND.

PHOTOGRAPHS UNSPLASH TEXT ALEXANDRA BECK



THE DECORATIONS ARE down, the cookies have been consumed (likely in quantities we promised ourselves wouldn't happen again), and the new year has arrived. For many, January is a time of fresh beginnings. But let's face it—the transition back to normal life after the holiday indulgence marathon can feel anything but fresh. If you're an expat or international living in Denmark, it's not just about getting back on track; it's about navigating the unique challenges of winter's darkness, cold weather, and unfamiliar traditions.

The good news? A post-holiday reset doesn't require a complete overhaul. Think of it more as a gentle nudge to refuel your body and mind. Here's how to do it, with a dash of *hygge* and some practical advice to make your reset as comforting as it is effective.

1. START WITH SMALL, SUSTAINABLE CHANGES

One of the biggest mistakes people make in January is diving into a “new year, new me” mentality that's so extreme it's doomed to fail. This year, skip the juice cleanse and the overly ambitious workout plan. Instead, focus on one or two small habits that will have a ripple effect on your overall well-being. For example, commit to drinking more water or adding an extra serving of vegetables to your meals each day. Small wins add up quickly and are much easier to maintain.

2. GET YOUR BODY MOVING AGAIN

After weeks of indulgence, sluggishness might have set in. The idea of exercise may feel daunting, especially when it's pitch black at 4 P.M. But movement doesn't have to mean an intense gym session. Denmark's love of cycling is a great place to start—hop on your bike and explore your local area, even if it's just a quick ride to the bakery for some whole-grain rugbrød. Alternatively, consider joining a local fitness class. Many expat-friendly gyms in Denmark offer sessions in English, and group settings can be a fantastic way to

meet new people while you get back into the groove.

If you prefer the outdoors, embrace the concept of *friluftsliv* (open-air living). Bundle up and go for a brisk walk—the fresh air will do wonders for your energy levels and mood.

3. FUEL YOUR BODY WITH BALANCE

Holidays often leave us feeling overfed yet undernourished. Instead of thinking about “detoxing” (spoiler: your liver's already got that covered), focus on nourishing your body. Start with protein-rich breakfasts, like eggs with rye bread or skyr with nuts and berries. Lunches and dinners can include hearty but healthy dishes, such as salmon with roasted root vegetables or a classic Danish stew packed with lean protein and vegetables.

Don't forget to hydrate. It's easy to overlook water intake during colder months, but staying hydrated can make a noticeable difference in energy and focus. Add a slice of lemon or some mint to your water for a refreshing twist.

4. CREATE A RESTFUL ROUTINE

The post-holiday reset isn't just about physical health—your mind needs care, too. If the holidays were filled with late nights and social gatherings, it's time to reestablish a restful routine. Danish winters may encourage early evenings, so take advantage of the darkness by creating a cosy wind-down ritual. Light some candles, curl up with a good book (bonus points for reading something that inspires you), and aim to get 7-9 hours of sleep each night.

5. BUILD CONNECTIONS

For expats, the holidays can be bittersweet. You may have felt the joy of connecting with loved ones back home, but returning to Denmark can sometimes bring a sense of isolation. Make it a priority to nurture connections where you are. Join a club, attend a cultural event, or organise a casual meet-up with fellow internationals. Denmark's emphasis on community and *hygge* means there

are plenty of opportunities to connect if you take the first step.

6. PRACTICE MINDFUL MOMENTS

The Danish concept of *hygge* isn't just about candles and blankets; it's about being present and savouring life's simple pleasures. Incorporate mindfulness into your daily routine by taking a few minutes each day to pause and reflect. Whether it's a short meditation, journaling, or simply enjoying your morning coffee without distractions, these moments can help you feel more grounded.

7. PLAN FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Once you've regained a sense of balance, start thinking about what you want to achieve in the coming months. Set realistic goals that excite you, whether it's exploring more of Denmark, learning a new skill, or improving your fitness. Break these goals into manageable steps, and remember to celebrate progress along the way.

A GENTLE REMINDER

January is an ideal time to reflect and reset, not to punish yourself for past indulgences. The key to a successful post-holiday reset is to approach it with kindness and patience. Your body and mind are resilient; they'll bounce back with the right care.

Think of this month as the foundation for the year ahead. Build strong habits, embrace the quiet moments, and lean into the unique opportunities that Denmark's winter offers. Progress doesn't have to be perfect—take it one step at a time, and you'll find yourself recharged and ready for whatever comes next. **THE-INTL**



"BUNDLE UP AND GO FOR A BRISK WALK—THE FRESH AIR WILL DO WONDERS FOR YOUR ENERGY LEVELS AND MOOD."



ALEXANDRA BECK
PERSONAL TRAINER &
NUTRITION COACH

Alex is a Swiss/Brit mom and wife who has lived in Copenhagen since 2009. She switched from corporate life in communications to the independent life of an outdoor personal and group fitness trainer. She coaches people of all ages and fitness levels to find fun and consistency in movement through individual and group workouts. Delivering entertainment and spreading group fitness magic is her superpower. Alex encourages you to high-five her if you see her in the capital!

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ALEX  BECK

KICKSTARTING THE YEAR WITH WELLNESS

PHOTOGRAPHS UNSPLASH TEXT OPHELIA WU

THE NEW YEAR always brings a sense of renewal and a perfect excuse to kickstart new resolutions, habits, or hobbies. After the challenges of 2024, prioritising wellness in 2025 could be one of the most valuable commitments you make to yourself.

I firmly believe that everything is interconnected: nurture your mind, and your body will respond with vitality; care for your physical health, and your mental and emotional well-being will flourish; protect your emotional state, and your mind and body will find peace. As internationals, we often push ourselves harder to prove our capabilities, which can easily disrupt our inner balance. So why not embrace something that nurtures your well-being as you step into the New Year? It's also a wonderful way to explore new interests, develop hobbies, and expand your community and network.

Copenhagen offers a diverse range of wellness options, including several owned or run by expats, catering to a variety of interests and needs. Here are a few to consider:

SOUND BATH AND MEDITATION

Ara'kai Beauty hosts sound bath sessions led by Yulianna Sardar, a dedicated sound therapy practitioner who has called Copenhagen home for the past decade. These sessions use Tibetan singing bowls, rattles, ocean drums, and chimes to create vibrations that relax the body and mind. It's a unique opportunity to find grounding and peace amidst the busyness of life.

YOGA, PILATES, AND FITNESS

Rive Gauche, located in Nørreport, offers rhythm-based yoga classes in a blue-lit studio, where you can flow to the beat and immerse yourself in an uplifting atmosphere. For those seeking a more boutique experience, Studio41 Pilates in Vesterbro provides small, intimate classes focused on classical Pilates. It's the ideal spot for building a long, lean, and strong body. If you're looking for something more high-energy, Hollywood-originated Barry's brings its intense workouts to Copenhagen. It's the perfect place for a challenging and energising fitness experience and meet some fellow expats, perhaps?

WELLNESS CENTRES

Float Studio brings the concept of floating—popular in Australia and the USA—to Copenhagen, offering a serene escape from daily stress. Floating allows you to relax in the water without swimming, creating a tranquil experience that promotes deep relaxation and mental clarity.

For those keen on cutting-edge wellness technology, One Thirty Labs offers a range of premium treatments, including cryotherapy. Their Cryo Body Contouring treatment combines heat and cold therapy (ranging from -18°C to +45°C) to target cellulite, fine lines, and body sculpting. Additionally, they offer infra-



red saunas, EMS training, and LED light therapy—ideal for anyone wanting to invest in rejuvenation and recovery.

SOCIAL CLUBS

If you're more of a social butterfly, why not join or start a wellness-oriented social club? Copenhagen is home to a variety of options, from running clubs and winter bathing groups to padel tennis teams. Alternatively, gather a few friends to create your own club centred around a shared interest, like ceramics Saturdays or art workshops. Let your creativity guide you in building a wellness habit that aligns with your passions.

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH WELLNESS

Engaging in wellness activities is not just about improving your physical and mental health—it's also an excellent way to connect with like-minded individuals from diverse backgrounds. For expats, this can be particularly meaningful as you navigate life in a new country. A supportive community can be instrumental in fostering a sense of belonging and stability.

Wellness is a deeply personal journey, and the key is to find activities and practices that resonate with you. Copenhagen's international wellness scene provides the perfect playground to explore and discover what works best for your body and mind. As you embark on your wellness journey this year, take the time to prioritise yourself and embrace the opportunities around you. You deserve it. **THE-INTL**

"AS INTERNATIONALS, WE OFTEN PUSH OURSELVES HARDER TO PROVE OUR CAPABILITIES, WHICH CAN EASILY DISRUPT OUR INNER BALANCE."




OPHELIA WU

FASHION CONSULTANT AND JOURNALIST

Ophelia is a dynamic fashion professional with roots in Hong Kong, a decade in London, and a home in Copenhagen since 2019. With a profound background and passion for fashion, beauty, interiors, and travel, she balances the bustle of everyday life with spirituality, wellness, and mindfulness, embracing Scandinavian culture through a global lens.

Her fashion journey began in 2007 at ELLE Hong Kong as an editor and stylist, leading to roles at multiple publications and being a part of the global styling team at Net-A-Porter.com in the UK. She has worked with renowned brands such as Matches and Matas Beauty, styled icons including Michelle Yeoh and Victoria Beckham, and collaborated with esteemed names like De Beers, Chaumet, and the British Fashion Council to craft compelling campaigns. Today, guided by a conscious approach to life, she channels her expertise in fashion, beauty, and interiors into social media and communications that transcends borders for brands, all while enjoying the charm of slow countryside living in Denmark.

 [Ophelia Wu](#)

 [Ophelia Wu](#)



FDM

THE DANISH CAR OWNERS ASSOCIATION.

PHOTOGRAPHS **FDM FB PAGE** TEXT **MARIANO ANTHONY DAVIES**



FDM IS THE Danish Car Owners Association that was founded in 1909 with its headquarters in Lyngby north of Copenhagen. The association was originally called "Forenede Danske Motorejere" and sprang from the magazine "Motor" (founded 1906), which to this day is the association's member magazine and, with 402,000 readers, is Denmark's largest car magazine.

When the first cars arrived in Denmark, they were greeted with great scepticism. The roads belonged to horses, bicycles and pedestrians. With the Motor Act of 1903, driving by car was almost prohibited. The restrictive legislation was the starting point for a strong countermovement by car enthusiasts. Led by the editor-in-chief of the magazine "Motor", the enthusiasts could see the many revolutionary possibilities and future perspectives that lie in motorised vehicles. As a culmination of this, FDM was founded in 1909.

From the start, FDM rolled up its sleeves to promote confidence in the motor car. Among other things, FDM set up international warning boards along the roads to increase road safety, donated money for road improvements and worked actively to open more roads for motorists. From the start, FDM has also been a consumer organisation, where agreements were made with oil companies and insurance companies for cash membership benefits, just as technical and legal advice was a core service.

THE FIRST TWO DECADES

FDM relentlessly continued its work to promote the cause of motorists through the 1910s and 1920s, and even the most foot-dragging politicians gradually realised that the car was the future with the adoption of the Traffic Act of 1923, as the final recognition of the car as an equal vehicle on the roads.

If you travelled by train in the 1920s, it was easy to cross the country. The train ferries made sure of that. It was a completely different story if you wanted to make the same trip by car. You could not count on getting a place at all on any crossing, and even if you did get a place, it was costly. As FDM saw no signs that the situation would improve, the Association took drastic measures. FDM had the car ferry "Heimdal" built at a Danish shipyard with plans to be responsible for ferrying itself across the Great Belt. That initiative made DSB (Danish State Railways) wake up. DSB ended up buying the car ferry from FDM, and from 1930 onwards, a car ferry service across the Great Belt was a reality.

MOTORWAYS ESTABLISHED

In 1934, what was called "The old Lillebæltsbro" was inaugurated with tracks for cars. The bridge was originally intended exclusively for train traffic, and that it was not only a train bridge was

largely due to the influence of FDM, which did a great deal of lobbying to insist that a large public investment, such as a bridge, must also be for the future and for people who drive.

The extra cost to make the bridge for cars came directly from the motorists themselves. Since 1924, car buyers had had to pay tax on their cars - and that revenue, FDM argued, should be spent on road networks and infrastructure that benefitted motorists. Finally, in 1938, Denmark's first motorway was established, cementing the car's role as a private vehicle and as essential for transport in general.

MILLENNIUM MILESTONES

In 2005, the Danish State monopoly on car inspections was lifted. This gave FDM a welcome opportunity to not only offer testing of cars, but also to review cars at its many test centres. In the same vein, the services of FDM's test centres were made available to everyone - but of course, with good discounts for its members. In cooperation with recognised partners, FDM began to offer both roadside assistance and even more advantageous insurance to its members.

It has long been clear that, at a global level, they had to think in new directions and other ways to succeed in living up to the climate goals that they needed to achieve to stem the climate changes that have been driven forward due to the use of fossil fuels. Through the 2010s, the electric car entered the scene as the technology that will contribute positively to greener motoring. For many car buyers, the encounter with this new and significantly different technology has been exciting. For others, it is unsafe and associated with many concerns.

FDM seeks to accommodate both types of drivers and support the green transition by inspiring, advising and guiding. It also works politically to ensure that Danish legislation matches climate goals, while ensuring that the transition takes place at a pace and in a way that Danish motorists can participate in, and which ensures continued positive mobility experiences for the individual. **THE-INTL**



MARIANO ANTHONY DAVIES
PRESIDENT & CEO OF
OXFORD BUSINESS
SERVICES APS

Mariano has over 40 years global experience as a business executive. He spent ten years with KPMG, so far thirty years with British Chambers of Commerce (while also running Oxford Business Services ApS). He is a British citizen, who grew up in Kent, went to boarding school in Sussex and has a British university education. He has been married to a Dane for over 45 years and has held over 150 official anti-Brexit speeches since 2016. He both speaks and writes Danish without difficulty.

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HUMMINGBIRD CAKE

A TROPICAL BURST OF FLAVOUR TO BEAT THE WINTER BLUES AND BRIGHTEN THE GREY SKIES ABOVE!

PHOTOGRAPHS & TEXT: NATASHA LIVIERO

HUMMINGBIRD CAKE

MAKES 1 X SHEET CAKE

INGREDIENTS FOR THE DRIED PINEAPPLE FLOWERS:

1 large pineapple

INGREDIENTS FOR THE CANDIED PECANS:

10g butter
40g muscovado sugar
50g maple syrup
1g ($\frac{1}{4}$ tsp) salt
1g ($\frac{1}{4}$ tsp) cinnamon
120g pecans

INGREDIENTS FOR THE CAKE:

280g flour
10g baking powder
6g bicarbonate of soda
2g salt
6g ground cinnamon
4g allspice
4g nutmeg
220g granulated sugar
200g eggs
200g neutral oil
10g vanilla extract
320g ripe bananas, mashed
450g tinned pineapple, drained
100g pecan nuts, roasted and coarsely chopped

METHOD FOR THE DRIED PINEAPPLE FLOWERS:

Set the oven to 110C°. Cut away the skin, top and bottom of the pineapple. Cut into thin slices, about 2-3 mm thick and pat dry with a paper towel. Place the pineapple slices onto a baking sheet and dry in the oven for 30 minutes. With a palette knife, gently turn each slice over and return to the oven for a further 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and place each slice into a mini cupcake tin, gently pushing them into the cup to form a flower shape. Return to the oven to dry completely. As oven temperatures vary, keep an eye on the pineapples, if they are turning brown, reduce your oven temperature. Store cooled pineapple flowers in an airtight container.

METHOD FOR THE CANDIED PECANS:

In a small saucepan, melt the butter, sugar, and maple syrup together. Once the sugar has dissolved, add the cinnamon, salt, and pecans and stir well to coat the nuts. Gently cook over low heat for a few minutes, allowing the syrup to reduce, before spreading the nuts onto baking paper to cool. Once cooled, gently rub the nuts with your fingers to remove any excess sugar, then store them in an airtight container.

METHOD FOR THE CAKE:

1. Set the oven to 170C°.
2. Line a sheet pan (33cm x 22cm x 5cm) with baking paper.
3. Sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and spices and set aside.
4. In a stand mixer, beat the eggs and sugar with a paddle attachment on medium-high speed until light and creamy.
5. Add the oil and vanilla and continue beating for a few minutes.
6. Turn the mixer to low speed and add the flour in three batches. Beat until just combined.
7. Fold in the mashed bananas, pineapple and nuts.
8. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 40 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.
9. Cool the cake in the pan for 15 minutes before carefully inverting it onto a cooling rack. Allow the cake to cool completely before removing the baking paper and moving it onto a plate. It is delicate and must be handled with care to prevent breaking.
10. For the cream cheese frosting, whisk the butter, cream cheese, confectioners sugar, lemon juice and salt until smooth. Add confectioner sugar to thicken the consistency if need be.
11. Spread the cream cheese frosting over the top of the cake and decorate with chopped candied pecans, dried pineapple flowers and fresh flowers of your choice.



NOTES:

* THE CANDIED PECANS AND DRIED PINEAPPLE FLOWERS CAN BE MADE UP TO THREE DAYS IN ADVANCE.

* THE CAKE CAN BE MADE A DAY AHEAD AND WRAPPED IN CLINGFILM.

* IN PLACE OF A SHEET PAN, BAKE IN 2 X 22CM ROUND/SQUARE TINS FOR 35 MINUTES.

* STORE FROSTED CAKE IN AN AIRTIGHT CONTAINER IN THE FRIDGE FOR 2-3 DAYS - ADD PECANS AND PINEAPPLE FLOWERS BEFORE SERVING.



NATASHA LIVIERO
PASTRY CHEF

Natasha is a pastry chef who is South African by birth and Croatian by blood. She spent many years working for a wellness publication but did an about-turn at the beginning of 2020 when she joined a culinary school to fulfil a lifelong dream to study patisserie. She's passionate about European patisserie and loves spending time in the kitchen experimenting with recipes (while quibbling with her fe-line friends), and is always on the hunt for interesting new cookbooks.

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YEARLY TRADITIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS PEXELS TEXT MONIKA PEDERSEN



THE NEW YEAR kicks off with the usual tradition of making New Year's resolutions. This is a celebrated activity whereby many people enjoy setting themselves goals or targets to set them on a better path or to follow a dream.

Such traditions celebrate life by signposting the passage of time over the year. This practice is often followed in schools. It provides students with highlights throughout the year and usually inspires and brings joy.

Teachers often start the year by asking students to reflect on their achievements to date and to consider areas in which they wish to grow or improve. Older students often set targets to hone the skills they need to be more successful in their studies. With younger children, goal setting is much simpler and often tends to involve pastoral elements such as being a better friend or becoming a class helper. These goals are often shared as part of a wall display with a tree, and each child's hopes written on a leaf or within the structure of a hot air balloon. There are so many options, but the very visual aspect allows children to return to the display and remind themselves of their endeavours.

TRADITIONS

Once January fades away, many Danish schools celebrate the 'Fastelavn' tradition in late February. This carnival tradition marks the start of Lent in Scandinavian countries.

At school, it means dressing up and enjoying the ancient tradition of 'beating a cat out of a barrel', which represents the removal of bad spirits in preparation for Easter. These days the barrel is full of sweets, and the one who manages to smash down the hanging barrel shares the goodies with the rest of the class. Special pastries are also enjoyed!

Valentine's Day may also be celebrated. In the younger classes, this provides an opportunity to reconnect with pastoral affairs as children exchange hearts with warm, loving messages written for each other.

March marks the start of Spring, and either March or April heralds Easter, with Easter egg hunts and the joy of shaking off the greyness of Winter. The clocks switch, and the longer days bring both students and teachers a new lease on life and energy!

May in the Danish calendar is a time of many public holidays. Hence, the weeks are short, which means that longer weekends are spent travelling to summer houses to enjoy family time and outdoor activities.

For older students, it is the exam period, the end of their studies, and the beginning of looking forward to the next stage of their academic journey.

By June, half a year has passed, and younger students are looking forward to their long-awaited holidays. This is often a time of transition, with many mobile families leaving for a new assignment in a new country. It is bittersweet, so a big emphasis is placed on 'giving closure' through 'goodbye' parties, cards, and



play dates.

July is a time for rest and recuperation.

August starts with a newness and a distinct energy. It is a time for making new friends, meeting new teachers, and learning new routines.

September is the time for bonding. After the freshness of a new academic year, it is vital to support a class in seeing themselves as a group. There is no better way of securing this than an overnight trip with specific outdoor team-building activities, making dinner together, and camping or a night at a youth hostel.

Before long, it is time for a break, quickly followed by one of the biggest dates on the calendar: Halloween. The excitement of dressing up and going 'trick-or-treating' is foremost for almost all students, regardless of age!

November is often marked by many ex-pats with the huge celebration of a Fall Festival and Thanksgiving. For Danes, it is the start of the 'Hygge' season. Hygge is all about being cosy, and coping with the darkness by indulging in simple treats such as hot chocolate with friends, beautiful candles, and enjoying delicious and hearty winter dishes.

And then, in a flash, it is December, which brings with it the tradition of making advent candle decorations to mark the countdown to Christmas Eve. A candle is lit each Sunday to mark the occasion.

A primary classroom needs an advent calendar so that each child can enjoy a treat. The children also decorate their classrooms with festive colours and creations to reflect the magic of the season.

TIME FLIES

The start of the year brings the prospect of lots of time and opportunities. This is true! However, it is quite incredible how quickly time passes, and New Year's celebrations are being enjoyed again! **THE-INTL**

"TEACHERS OFTEN START THE YEAR BY ASKING STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE AND TO CONSIDER AREAS IN WHICH THEY WISH TO GROW OR IMPROVE."



MONIKA PEDERSEN
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATOR

Monika comes from the London area of the UK, where she worked in the state system and the international school system, as an English teacher of 11-18 students and then a high school principal. She has also worked in leadership roles in Germany and in Denmark. She has an overview of the British, International, American, and the Danish system. She has many years of experience and continues to enjoy the profession. She has relocated to Denmark with her Danish husband.

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AULD LANG SYNE: BRIDGING SCOTTISH AND DANISH HERITAGE.

PHOTOGRAPHS PEXELS

TEXT HEATHER STORGAARD

SCOTLAND LIES JUST across the North Sea from Jutland, as I've written many times since starting at The International three years ago. It shouldn't be a big surprise, then, that shared culture, history, and traditions crop up, but somehow it still is. Many Scots see Denmark as a utopia to dream of, basing their whole perspective on images of Nyhavn on Instagram. Danes have a corresponding tendency to imagine the whole of the British and Irish Isles as a sort of London-ish blob somewhere out to sea. Real cultural understanding is complex to build up from such starting points. Still, a rich shared heritage is waiting if you look for it – this is epitomised in Jutlandic writer Jeppe Aakjær who wrote the song '*Skuld gammel venskab rejn forgo*' based on Rabbe Burns *Auld Lang Syne*.

AULD LANG SYNE

Maybe you sang *Auld Lang Syne* at New Year? A tradition around the English-speaking world, it was penned by the Scottish bard Robert Burns in 1788, based on old Scots songs. As well as ushering in the New Year, it welcomes the month of January, when Scots end with panache celebrating Burns Night on the 25th of the month, complete with feasting, whisky and song. But it's also possible that you heard a different version if you spent the holidays in Denmark, thanks to 20th-century Jutlandic writer and translator Jeppe Aakjær. He translated Burns' most famous song from Scots to Jutlandic, taking the first line as the title '*Skuld gammel venskab rejn forgo*' (Should Old Acquaintance be forgot). In both languages, the song asks us to remember long-standing friendships. Perhaps a particularly fitting call to those of us living busy, international lives?

JEPPE AAKJÆR & RABBE BURNS

Aakjær was a key figure in *Det folkelige gennembrud*, also known in English as The Jutland Movement, a literary movement from around the turn of the 20th cen-



ture. It was characterised by attempts to portray a greater sense of realism, coming closer to the lives of ordinary people. This was the first time that literature written by figures from outside of the cultural elite had been widely published and consumed in Denmark.

Although their lives took place a century apart, Burns and Aakjær had a great number of similarities. They were both the sons of farmers and drew on that world of long summer days and hard graft in their work. However, they were also far from simple or one-dimensional in their romanticism. Both penned works that rallied against the injustices of life in the downtrodden class of rural labourers, with Aakjær even briefly imprisoned for his political views. Later in life, he visited Scotland to learn more about Burns, who he quoted as inspiring some of his most important works.

SCOTS AND JUTLANDIC

Robert Burns is now the most famous Scot the world over. But his choice to write in the *Scots Leid* (Scots Language) rather than English was controversial in his lifetime. Aakjær similarly wrote in the Jutlandic dialect of his home region in many poems. This dialect can still be heard, as any Copenhagener will tell me at length when I open my own mouth. But still, with a nationwide media landscape and an ever-growing movement towards urban living,

Danish is becoming increasingly standardised towards a more Zealandic-resembling norm. Having literature written in Jutlandic, then, is a powerful tool to preserve and celebrate the dialect.

CELEBRATIONS?

So raise a toast to Burns this January! Even if you don't have a connection to Scotland, then for his indirect contribution to Danish literature. You could even treat yourself to rye whisky from the fields of Aakjær's local region, made at the award-winning Thy Distillery. Since I pitched this idea a couple of months ago, the Danish-Scottish Society have announced a talk by Bodil Jacobsen of Aakjærskabet in the English language on 8th January, available online and completely free. If you are in Copenhagen, the St Andrew Society of Denmark is hosting a grand Burns' Supper on Saturday, 25th January, for members and non-members alike.

LITERATURE TODAY

A hundred years on from The Jutland Movement, I found it hard to find any Danish literature that really reflected my rural Denmark while learning the language. Trendy Nordic noir was the main recommendation at language school five years ago. I eventually stumbled across Thomas Korsgaard's works, set 'in communities where everyone knows everyone – and not always for the better' (according to the synopsis of his most recent novel, *Snydt Ud Af Næsen*). If Aakjær and Burns wanted people to grasp the reality of rural, forgotten corners of the country, I don't think anything could be more fitting today than Korsgaard's works. While the picture they paint is far from glossy, it depicts my Denmark more than any other works I've found. **THE-INTL**

"ALTHOUGH THEIR LIVES TOOK PLACE A CENTURY APART, BURNS AND AAKJÆR HAD A GREAT NUMBER OF SIMILARITIES."



HEATHER STORGAARD
WRITER

Heather Storgaard comes from Northern Scotland, grew up in Switzerland, and lived in England and Germany. In 2017 she met her Danish husband, who proudly received British dual citizenship in 2024, and they now split their time between Central Scotland and Helgenæs, a peninsula in rural Eastern Jutland. Suitably for a Scot, Heather works with whisky, spending her time writing and translating, with a particular soft-spot for the up-and-coming world of Nordic Whisky.

[heatherstorgaard](#)



HOW TO: STUDY AT A UNIVERSITY IN DENMARK.

PHOTOGRAPHS AARHUS UNIVERSITY FB PAGE / ANGELIKA BENESOVA TEXT NATÁLIA ŠEPITKOVÁ



ANGELIKA BENESOVA CAME to Denmark from Slovakia in 2019 to study at UCN International Hospitality and Tourism Management. Then, she switched her focus to International Sales and Marketing, where she earned her BA. In 2023, she started her master's degree in Culture, Communication and Globalization at AAU, focusing on International Politics, Migrations, and Movements.

Q: *Why did you decide to study abroad and choose Denmark?*

A: For me, it was a spontaneous decision. I always knew I wanted to live abroad, but I never imagined Denmark would be the place I'd end up. One random day in high school, someone from an agency that helped students with education abroad gave a presentation about studying in Denmark. Something about it just clicked with me, and without overthinking it, I applied for it that day.

Q: *Was it challenging to get into a Danish university?*

A: I wouldn't say it was challenging – actually, I found it much easier than applying to a Slovak university. I also applied to universities in Slovakia at the time since I wasn't sure where I'd get accepted. All I had to do was send in my CV, a cover letter, and my grades and take the TOEFL test. In Slovakia, the process felt more rigid. They didn't really care about your motivation or personal aspirations. Instead, they focused mainly on your average grades, and you had to take a general knowledge test, which could cover anything.

Q: *Do you still remember your first impressions when you started studying?*

A: Yes, I was scared and nervous. I kept questioning whether I had made the right decision and whether I could handle living abroad and studying in a completely different language. Back then, I doubted myself a lot, but that started to change as time went on. When it came to the universities, I was genuinely impressed by how well-equipped they were and how students were treated. The flat hierarchy in Denmark was a huge shift for me: an example could be referring to your professors by first name, which felt so strange at first but also comforting. Another thing that stood out was how student-friendly the universities are. There are amazing spaces explicitly designed for group work and collaboration, which makes it easier to connect with classmates and work together. The whole environment is really focused on supporting students and helping them succeed.

Q: *How does studying in Denmark work? Did you have to pay anything for your studies? Did you get a scholarship and accommodation? Etc.*



A: Luckily, I didn't have to pay anything, and that's one of the most significant advantages offered to EU students – education in Denmark is completely free. On top of that, as an EU student, I'm eligible for SU; however, to receive it, I need to work a minimum of 10 hours a week, which hasn't been a problem for me since I have a student job in marketing. As for accommodation, it's a bit different from many other countries where dormitories are common. In Denmark, you can live in student apartments or find your own place. It gives you a bit more flexibility, but you need to plan ahead for it.

Q: *Have you ever felt that Danish university students are more advanced in education? For example, are students better prepared for university by their previous schooling?*

A: Definitely, I can recognise this feeling. Danish students are trained as critical thinkers and are encouraged to be more independent from a young age. In Slovakia, I often had to follow what was taught 100%, with little room for questioning or challenging ideas. Another thing is that Danish students already have experience with the Danish education system. They know how to write projects and are familiar with study techniques like PBL (Project-Based Learning), which was entirely new to me. However, many projects are done in groups so that you can learn a lot from each other. Everyone brings their own perspective, which enriches the process.

Q: *What does studying at a Danish university look like?*

A: At the university, we don't focus on tests or memorising information. Instead, exams are done through projects. We research a specific issue, analyse it from different angles, critically evaluate sources, and propose suggestions and solutions. It's all about developing a practical, real-world approach to learning. Professors are very approachable and relaxed. You call them by their first names, and asking questions is always encouraged. Studying in Denmark is very practical overall. We work on real issues with companies, complete internships with businesses or organisations, and gain hands-on experience that prepares us for the job market. It's a very collaborative and application-focused way of learning, which I think sets it apart.

Q: *Is studying in Denmark difficult?*

A: It's hard to say if studying in Denmark is "difficult" because, like anywhere, there are stressful periods. However, you'll get good results if you put in the effort. One thing I really appreciate is the support system during projects. We have regular meetings with supervisors who help guide us, address any issues, and answer questions. In my homeland, there's a big emphasis on memorisation and learning things that are easily accessible. Rather than focusing solely on memorisation, it seems more practical to emphasise developing skills that help you critically assess and analyse information, especially given how easily accessible knowledge is through the internet and AI.

Q: *What has been the most significant positive aspect of studying at a Danish university?*

A: It is how much I've grown personally and academically. First, I've greatly improved my English because living and studying in an English-speaking environment pushes you to master the language. On top of that, I've started learning Danish, which is a great way to connect with the local culture and people. I've also had the chance to meet so many amazing and talented people from all around the world. Overall, the education here is moving me forward. It's not just about gaining knowledge but developing skills to help me in the real world.

Q: *Is there anything you don't like about studying in Denmark?*

A: The only thing I don't like about studying in Denmark is project deadlines. They can sometimes feel intense, especially when there's so much work to do. But honestly, that's just part of the learning process, and I've gotten used to it.

Q: *What was the most challenging?*

A: The most challenging part was leaving my family. At first,



I ALWAYS KNEW I WANTED TO LIVE ABROAD, BUT I NEVER IMAGINED DENMARK WOULD BE THE PLACE I'D END UP. ONE RANDOM DAY IN HIGH SCHOOL, SOMEONE FROM AN AGENCY THAT HELPED STUDENTS WITH EDUCATION ABROAD GAVE A PRESENTATION ABOUT STUDYING IN DENMARK. SOMETHING ABOUT IT JUST CLICKED WITH ME, AND WITHOUT OVERTHINKING IT, I APPLIED FOR IT THAT DAY.

I didn't realise how hard it would be, but it's a natural part of the experience. Another challenge was finding my first professional part-time student job. However, I have managed to overcome it.

Q: *Did you need to have Danish as a language for your studies, or is English enough?*

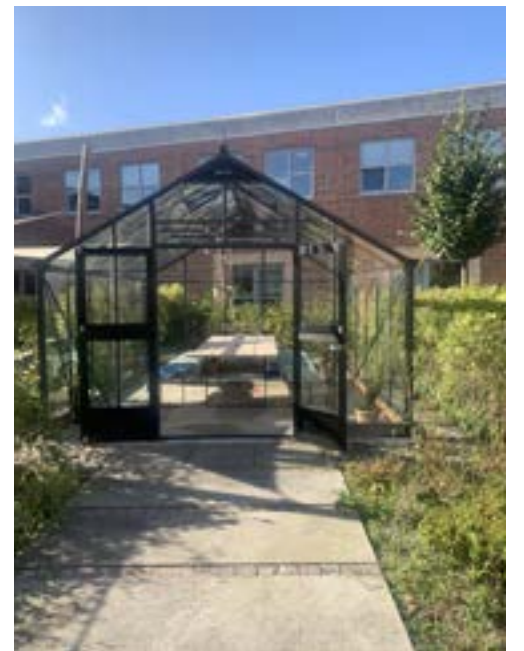
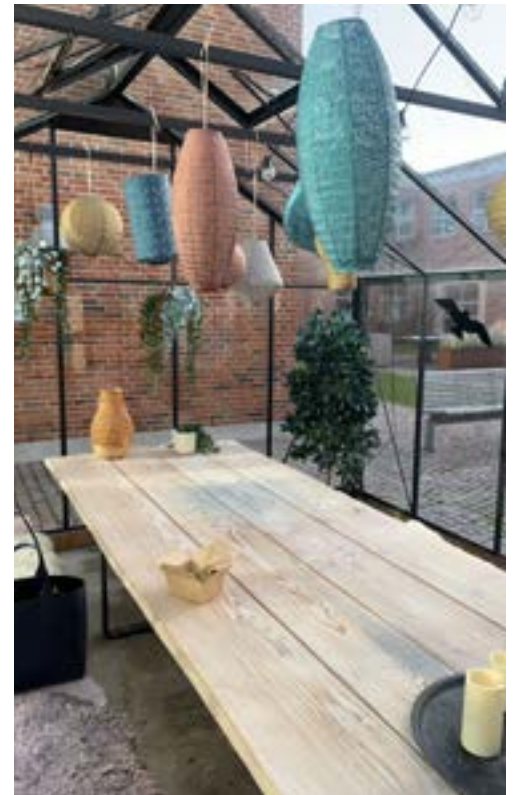
A: I didn't need Danish for my studies because I was enrolled in an international programme taught entirely in English. However, some programmes can only be studied in Danish, depending on your field of study. However, I would encourage everyone to learn the local language. Just because you don't need Danish for your studies doesn't mean you won't need it for other aspects of your life in Denmark. If you plan on looking for a job in Denmark, living here long-term, or possibly having a family, speaking Danish becomes essential. It's worth making the effort for your personal and professional life.

Q: *Do international students have an open door to the Danish labour market after completing their studies in Denmark?*

A: Of course, international students have access to the Danish labour market after completing their studies, but it's not always an easy process, and I won't lie that it can be challenging. I believe you need to make twice the effort to stand out. I recommend that anyone studying or planning to study in Denmark start looking for a professional student job in their field as soon as possible rather than waiting until after they've finished their studies. By the time you graduate, you should already have some experience. In my opinion, it makes a big difference. Additionally, many resources are available to international students, like the university career centre, the local international house, various support networks, matchmaking events, and language schools. These can help you navigate the job market and find opportunities that align with your field.

Q: *What are your plans for the future?*

A: I've already settled in Denmark, so I don't plan to return to Slovakia. I like Denmark, and I've put in a lot of effort to get here, so it would be a shame to throw that away. I'm happy with where I am and see myself continuing to build my life and career here. **THE-INTL**



NATÁLIA ŠEPITKOVÁ
FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND WRITER

Natalia is a Slovak journalist based in Aalborg, Denmark. She has around 15 years of experience in journalism. Her experiences as an editor and a reporter were founded in Slovak magazines and newspapers. She was also working as a TV reporter, a TV moderator and a host in radio broadcasting. Part of her career included working with PR and marketing. Natália is also a content creator on her social media. Follow her blog www.mamavdanske.com, where she writes about life in Denmark.

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RESOLUTION-FREE JANUARY! 7 TOP TIPS FOR THRIVING IN 2025.

PHOTOGRAPHS **PEXELS** TEXT **FIONA L SMITH**

AS JANUARY BEGINS, we're in the heavy embrace of deep mid-winter. It's dark and cold, and most of us are now recovering from the whirlwind of December – a month of pushing against nature's impulse to hibernate in order to shop, socialise and celebrate.

January isn't the right time for making sweeping life changes, and unsurprisingly, about 80% of New Year's resolutions have failed by mid-February. Most people's resolutions are well-intentioned but unsustainable—a case of too much, too fast, too soon. This 'change it all' approach can overwhelm our nervous system, leaving us feeling deflated, defeated, and even ashamed rather than empowered.

So this year, let's ditch the pressure of resolutions and focus on gentle, embodied steps that nurture lasting change. Here are seven tips to guide you toward a more sustainable and fulfilling year.

1. EMBRACE SMALL, INTENTIONAL CHANGES

If something in your life isn't working, start by acknowledging it. Maybe you're feeling trapped in a job you hate, are drowning in debt, stuck in a difficult relationship or living somewhere you wish you didn't? It's very easy to end up catastrophising, thinking this situation is forever, but it doesn't have to be.

Start by making really small changes right now to create momentum towards a different future. Identify what you can control and what you love doing and do more of that rather than focusing on external factors outside your control. Even a tiny 2% shift in attention can totally change where we end up. Can you carve out time to work on a passion project or make sure you talk to one friend every day? By taking small, positive actions in the present, you set the stage for bigger shifts to unfold naturally.

2. PUT YOURSELF AT THE CENTRE OF YOUR LIFE

Are you a chronic people-pleaser, constantly prioritising others at the expense of your own needs? Are you living your life according to other people's belief systems rather than your own? If you've been living your life with the happiness of others at the centre of it, it's time to put yourself there and gently reclaim your space and your sense of YOU.

Start by carving out a pocket of time every day just for you. Use it to journal, have a bath or simply sit with a cup of tea in silence, allowing your thoughts to flow. Over time, these 'me' moments add up, helping you reconnect with your own needs and desires. Remember, you're not just a supporting actor in someone else's story - you're the lead in your own.

3. LIMIT STRESSFUL INPUT

Does scrolling through the news or Social Media first thing in the morning leave you feeling anxious or inadequate? The brain is wired to amplify whatever we pay attention to. If you start your day steeped in negativity or the perfections of others (versus the perceived inadequacy of your own life), your nervous system will remain on high alert, scanning for more of what is wrong or dangerous.

Give yourself a morning "buffer zone" - wait an hour before picking up your phone and use this time to ease into the day with something calming or energising like a workout, a walk or a mindful moment (there are some fantastic short practices on YouTube if you don't have your own workout or yoga routine).

4. CULTIVATE A MORNING PRACTICE

This doesn't need to be complicated! A few minutes of medita-

tion, breathing exercises, listening to an inspirational podcast or writing a simple gratitude journal can work wonders. Ask yourself: What's one thing I'm looking forward to today? A recent moment that made me smile or laugh? This practice of paying attention to 'Glimmers' (the opposite of trauma triggers) helps your nervous system orient toward safety and connection. It also sets a positive tone for the day ahead, getting your conscious mind looking out for more of the same.

5. HYDRATE, HYDRATE, HYDRATE!

We know we need to eat well to be healthy, but many people are chronically under-hydrated, which is a huge problem when we consider that our bodies are over 70% water. Begin every day with a large glass of warm water (body temperature) with a good squeeze of lemon juice or a spoonful of apple cider vinegar. This alkalises and cleans the gut, improves the health of the microbiome and boosts our mental capacity – just a 2% reduction in brain hydration can result in short-term memory loss, so we're doing ourselves a big favour by rehydrating first thing in the morning. And, remember to carry a water bottle with you to drink from throughout the day.

6. MOVE YOUR BODY DAILY

Connect with your body in ways that feel freeing, energising or relaxing. Whether it's a brisk walk, a dance in your kitchen, cycling or yoga, the most important thing is to let your body guide you and listen to what it 'says' - it will be different every day. Notice how you feel before, during and after you move - perhaps you experience more lightness, warmth, tingling or calm. Movement helps to regulate the nervous system, lift your mood and boost energy. It's a daily gift of care – a message to yourself that you're worth it.

7. TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR LIFE

Much of what happens in our lives is shaped by the choices we make and the actions we take on a daily basis. Ask yourself - are you letting your life happen to you, or are you choosing to believe and act as though you have agency and that you can create a life that happens for you?

I invite you to slow down this January and listen to your body – it's talking to you in sensations and symptoms – this is a month in which you can plant the seeds of sustainable change. With intention and small steps, you can create a life that feels both nourishing and inspiring - all year round. **THE-INTL**







"ASK YOURSELF - ARE YOU LETTING YOUR LIFE HAPPEN TO YOU, OR ARE YOU CHOOSING TO BELIEVE AND ACT AS THOUGH YOU HAVE AGENCY AND THAT YOU CAN CREATE A LIFE THAT HAPPENS FOR YOU?"



FIONA L SMITH
SOMATIC THERAPIST
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Fiona is a Somatic Therapist and Coach, with a clinic in Frederiksberg and online. Specialising in trauma healing, nervous system regulation, and holistic wellness, Fiona is passionate about helping women move beyond burnout, people-pleasing, and anxiety or pain to rebuild confidence, ease and empowerment. Originally from the UK, Fiona is mum to a 13-year-old son and step-mum to 17-year-old twins. She loves wild walks with her dog and winter dipping (with sauna!) She thrives on good food and a good book, wild dance, and time in the sun.

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CRISIS PREPPING CHECKLIST!



BE PREPARED FOR THREE DAYS

The Danish authorities recommend that you and your household be self-sufficient for at least three days in a crisis.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

If you are prepared and able to take care of yourself and your loved ones, authorities can focus their efforts where the needs are greatest, helping to normalise the situation. The more people who can fend for themselves and assist others during and immediately after a crisis, the stronger we stand as a community.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Here are some simple steps to help you prepare. These recommendations have been developed in collaboration with various Danish authorities and represent a joint assessment of how to respond to crises:

Basic supplies: Ensure you have enough food, water, and essential medications for at least three days.

Communication: Have a plan for staying informed and communicating with family members.

First aid: Keep a first aid kit and know basic first aid procedures.

Utilities: Know how to turn off utilities like gas, water, and electricity if necessary.

Safety: Have tools and supplies for essential home repairs and personal safety.

COMMUNITY EFFORT

You might only need to use some of this advice, but it's good to be prepared. Do what you can to help yourself and those around you—family, neighbours, and friends. Denmark is known for its strong community spirit, and by following these guidelines, we can be even better prepared for future crises.

HERE IS AN ESSENTIAL LIST OF WHAT EVERY HOUSEHOLD SHOULD HAVE:

DRINKING WATER:

Drinking water (3L per person per day)

Water for animals or livestock

FOOD:

Long-lasting food that doesn't need to be cooked

MEDICINE & FIRST AID:

Prescription medications

First aid kit

Iodine tablets (for people under 40, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers)

HYGIENE PRODUCTS:

Toilet paper

Hand sanitiser

Nappies, tampons and sanitary towels

WARMTH:

Blankets, duvets and warm clothes

OTHER NECESSITIES:

Power bank for your mobile phone

Torch

OTHER NECESSITIES:

Batteries

Physical payment cards (remember your PIN code)

Cash (coins and small notes)

Candles & matches

COMMUNICATION:

AM/FM radio that runs on battery, solar power or hand crank (a car radio is an alternative)

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

Are there children or older adults in your house?

Do you live exposed to a flooding area?

Do you have alternative transport options in the event of a flood?

Can you help or get help from family, neighbours or friends?

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO THE BEREDSKABSSTYRELSEN WEBSITE