

## **"The Xenophobe's guide to the Danes"**

"Danes are not great social kissers. For most purposes a handshake will do. The frequency of handshaking in Denmark lies somewhere between the English, who do it once in a lifetime, and the French who shake hands whenever they have been out of the room. When something more than a handshake is required, Danes adopt a non-kissing embrace. There is no facial contact, just a dignified leaning together of the upper halves of the body, and maybe a mutual clapping on the back".

"They say what they think about sex, politics, religion, everything. Small talk can assume monstrous proportions. They will tell you frankly how much their mortgage is, how much they earn per hour or whether they shave their armpits. They will ask you equally frankly "Is it hot in here or is it just my menopause?", or "How old are you Hillary? You don't mind me calling you Hillary do you, Mrs. Clinton?".

"Danish is not a beautiful language. But it is economical. Why invent a new word when two old ones are perfectly adequate? For example, direct translations give: the dust sucker (vacuum cleaner), swine meat (pork), beating meat (stewing beef), body burning (cremation), flying machine (aeroplane) and breast wart (nipple). Words, like everything else, are recycled where possible : hej means hello, hej hej means goodbye. Fyr means fire, pine or young man. Brud means rupture, bride or weasel. Listeners have to pay attention to context and tone of voice if misunderstandings are to be avoided. Perhaps this is why Denmark produces about 25% of the world's hearing aids."

About the EU : "the fact that the word "Euro" is like "uro (meaning trouble, unrest disquiet and concern) doesn't help either"

Dress code : "Children do not wear school uniform, but they don't need to: from the age of six months they are dressed alike anyway. For comfort, and the convenience of the child-minder, clothing is index-linked to the weather forecast. By the time children start school, parents are fully aware of the advantages of investing in practical, washable, 100% waterproof, thermal, wool-lined garments that fasten with Velcro tapes. That rather narrows down the field of choice."

"In the spirit of the New Europe, Danes try very hard to like the Germans, but it's hard work. They are convinced that the Germans are trying to take over Europe, cunningly disguised as tourists. They are intensively concerned that the poelse tyskere (sausage Germans) will buy Jutland as soon as they get the chance and turn it into a windsurfing centre. Germans regularly fall asleep on their sailboards and have to be fished

out of the North Sea halfway to Grimsby by the long-suffering Danish air-sea rescue service. "

"Denmark is made up of 406 islands. It is a little larger than The Netherlands and could fit into Sweden ten times (and has tried at various times in history)". "The Danes think of their neighbours as they would members of their family. The other Scandinavian countries are of course brothers. Norway is accepted as equal, perhaps even slightly admires for its natural beauty and exclusivity. Sweden is the boring older brother who thinks he knows best. The Finns are moody, unpredictable and possibly autistic. Germany is the indulgent uncle, patting heads with disconcerting shows of affection".

## **And something only for the Danes:**

Du skal være stolt af at være Dansk fordi:

I Danmark....kan du få leveret en pizza hurtigere end du kan få en ambulance.

I Danmark....tror folk de lever sundt når de bestiller en dobbelt cheeseburger, en stor pommes frites og en Cola LIGHT.

I Danmark....skal man gå helt ned bag i supermarkedet for at købe mælk og grønsager, og derefter stå i kø. Tobak og spiritus kan købes lige ved døren.

I Danmark....Er bankens yderdør altid åben og bankkassidenterne sidder i åbne kontorlandskaber uden panserglass, men kuglepennen ved skranken er lænket fast.

I Danmark....Stiller man for 150.000 kr bil i indkørslen, fordi der ikke er plads i garagen, hvor den punkterede trillebør, de slidte vinterdæk og den 12 år gamle plæneklipper er låst inde.

I Danmark....bruger man gladeligt for 10 kr ekstra benzin for at finde en tank, hvor man sparer 8 kr ved at tanke op.

I Danmark....Brokker man sig over at man skal betale 180% afgift på en ny bil, og køber en hver tredje år.

I Danmark....har folk, der kun forlader deres lejlighed for at arbejde og købe ind, en mobiltelefon og en fritids/ulykkes forsikring.

I Danmark....er der handicap parkeringspladser foran idrætshallen.

I Danmark....beklager forældre sig over at deres børn får for lidt motion, og køber en Playstation til dem i julegave.