

# WHAT PIQUES YOUR INTERESTS?

JOIN A CLUB AND BUILD A NETWORK



Connecting Internationals and Danes through Culture and Sport



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## WHAT ARE DANISH CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS ALL ABOUT?

In Denmark participating in the activities of local clubs and associations is an old tradition reaching back to the 18th Century. A club or association is a co-operation based on the voluntary participation of people who share an interest, hobby or sport. These may vary from book clubs over tennis associations to political parties. Since most clubs and associations are run by volunteers, membership fees are affordable for everyone. Depending on the members participating, each club or association has a distinct set of norms and values that define the nature of the community.

Joining a local club or association is a great way to meet with Danes from your neighbourhood while at the same time pursuing your interests.

## THE INITIATIVE

Analyses show that 89% of Danish clubs and associations are open towards international members. Yet, 83% of internationals in Denmark find it difficult to obtain information on local clubs and associations.

To provide easier access to clubs and associations, International Community has started the initiative 'Connecting Internationals and Danes through Culture and Sport'. The initiative aims at facilitating contact, network and friendships amongst international newcomers and Danes prior to your arrival in Denmark.

Read more about International Community at [www.internationalcommunity.dk](http://www.internationalcommunity.dk)



## WHAT CLUB MEMBERS SAY



LIZZY

**Background:** from Southampton, England  
- moved to Denmark in 2012

**Professional profile:** PhD student in bioinformatics

"I have ended up making many good friends through the triathlon club, so I would definitely encourage others to pursue their interests and meet like-minded people. If you make the effort, you will always find people who are just waiting to meet you and welcome you into their group".



INGER

**Background:** from Netherlands - lived in Italy and Germany  
- moved to Denmark in 2010

**Professional profile:** journalist

"Join a club. Take up a hobby and you will end up making friends. You all share the same fate in learning something new through making mistakes and celebrating successes".



KAREN

**Background:** from Belgium - moved to Denmark in 2001

**Professional profile:** conference organiser

"It takes a lot of effort and energy to get so heavily involved in clubs, and it is time-consuming. But for me it has definitely been worthwhile. It helped me to understand the Danes and got me closer to them. On top of that, I got the opportunity to develop other skills – to be club president, sailing instructor and webmaster".



## 10 REASONS TO JOIN A CLUB

- 1 Expand your network
- 2 Meet Danes from your local area who share your interests
- 3 Develop true friendships
- 4 Enjoy the comfort of doing something you are familiar with or good at while getting to know people with similar interests
- 5 Gain insight into Danish traditions and customs
- 6 Develop your skills and pursue your interest with likeminded
- 7 Gain new perspectives within the field of your particular interest
- 8 Improve your Danish language skills
- 9 Get involved – become a volunteer
- 10 Spice up your everyday life

## MY RUNNING CLUB ADVENTURE

I had been running for a year with this club and it seemed that my body had finally adapted to the pace and the training programme. I was able to understand the instructions: "Pas på, hold til højre, lige ud..." And I knew the Marselis forest like the back of my hand.

It was one of these sunny summer days that make Aarhus feel like a paradise place. I had bought a small gift for the coach to thank him for his good advice and his kind support the weekend before at the Aarhus city half marathon.

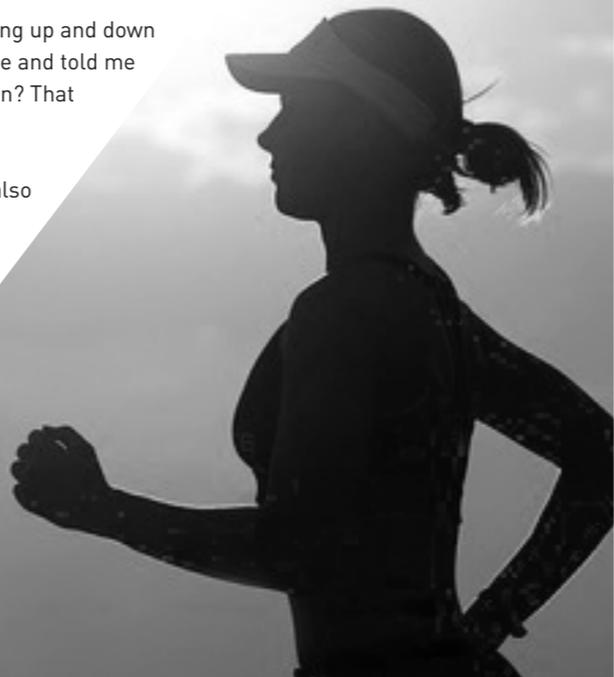
The coach had run alongside me the whole time, had cheered me up when my legs had started shaking and together we had improved my personal record by seven minutes!

My intention was to give the gift to the coach at the end of the training. While we were running up and down the trails of Marselis forest, as we usually do on our Saturday workouts, the coach ran by me and told me to stay after the training. His tone sounded rough and I got a bit nervous. What did that mean? That was very unusual.

As I was waiting for the coach after the training I realised that another girl of the club was also waiting for him: the coach came to us and explained that he wanted both of us to become trainers. He wanted to acknowledge our enthusiasm, constancy and motivation. Me? Really!? The foreign girl who used to need a week to reconstitute from a 3km-run! I felt overwhelmed with joy and honour. For the first time I felt truly integrated in the Danish society. I handed over the gift to the coach and it was his turn to look very surprised and emotional.

I accepted the offer and I have been a trainer in this running club ever since. I keep making Danish friends, discovering new running routes around Aarhus and improving my race-times. And guess what? I even got engaged to a Danish runner.

Chloé, France



## FUN FACTS AND HELPFUL TIPS

- Ask questions about the traditions, customs and unwritten rules of your new club or association – initiate a conversation and get to know the community better
- Find someone who can translate for you. Alternatively, you might need to remind your fellow club or association members to speak English whenever you are around
- Learning to speak Danish will be a great advantage – although the vast majority of Danes speaks English fairly well, Danes prefer to speak Danish in mixed groups
- Remember to cancel by phone or e-mail whenever you are unable to participate in the activities of the club or association. Moreover, the Danes are known for their punctuality – so it is a good idea to show up on time!
- Volunteer to help with practical tasks. Members of Danish clubs and associations commonly take turns at driving for tournaments, baking or cooking for events, washing the team uniforms, staying to help tidying up etc.
- Seasons vary from activity to activity and club to club – for instance the tennis season starts in May. Don't be frustrated if you cannot start right away. Moreover, there may be a waiting list for popular activities
- Bring cake on your birthday or beer for the team when celebrating a great match – Danes love all kinds of celebrations not to mention 'hygge', in essence meaning creating a warm atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life
- Danes are known for their liberal and embarrassment-free way of life – for instance, communal changing and bathing is custom in Denmark, though boys and girls/men and women change separately
- Religion is rarely talked about – although nearly 80% of the Danish population are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, Danes only rarely participate in ceremonies – also Danes tend to be private about their religious views
- Danes might seem reserved at first – take initiative, introduce yourself and ask questions – you will find that they are outspoken and warm-hearted people once you get under their skin
- Once you have a Danish friend, you have a friend for life – if you have a problem, they will come to your rescue and will be there for you in thick and thin
- Ask for help. For fear of invading your private space, a Dane will rarely help you out spontaneously. However, if you ask for help, a Dane will never reject you!

**ERHVERV AARHUS**



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community