

National cycle routes in Denmark

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Accommodation

There is a good selection of accommodation to suit every pocket. At the slightly more expensive end of the range there are hotels and inns, where a double room typically costs from DKK 400 upwards. A list is available from tourist information offices or on the Internet.

Bed & Breakfast (B&B) is becoming increasingly common in Denmark – including along cycle routes. See the leaflet entitled "**B&B i DK**" for a summary or ask the local tourist information office. The leaflet entitled "**Bondegårdsferie, Ferie på landet**", which is available free of charge from the National Association for Agritourism, also provides information on a variety of accommodation.

Danish youth hostels are very comfortable and offer family rooms. In peak season between 1 June and 1 September it is advisable to book in advance. "**Vandrerhjem i Danmark**" from Danhostel provides information on more than 100 youth hostels with 1-5 stars and is available free. It is also possible to book online.

Campsites welcome cyclists and some have a special area for tents where cars are not allowed. Some campsites also let chalets. "**Camping Danmark**" published by the Danish Camping Board costs DKK 95 and provides information on more than 500 campsites with 1-5 stars.

To stay at a youth hostel or campsite, you will need a membership/camping card (which can be purchased on arrival, however). Overnight accommodation costs around DKK 100 per person at a youth hostel and DKK 50 per person at a campsite. In recent years a network of cheap tent sites has been built up (free or DKK 15 per night). Please see "**Overnatning i det fri 2002-03, teltpladser og naturlejrpladser**" published by the Danish Outdoor Council's Experience Exchange Group. The book costs DKK 95.

Bikes and public transport

Public transport in the form of trains, buses and ferries can be used to reach your chosen holiday area and save a bit of energy en route.

Taking your bike with you on the train is now easier and cheaper. The maximum fare from Skagen to Gedser is DKK 50. Children under 10 years of age can take a bike with them free of charge. Intercity trains serve the whole country and take a limited number of bikes. Advance bookings are required between 1 May and 31 August (DKK 15). At the weekend there are also interregional trains, where reservations are not required. A standard bike "clip card" can be used for all journeys. From summer 2002 onwards the Storebælt line will have four departures a day with space for non-folding trailers, tandems and special bikes to replace the Storebælt bus. Ordinary bikes can go by Intercity train from Korsør or Nyborg. The Øresund line has space for 16 bikes per train, with departures every 20 minutes. Trailers and tandems can also be taken on Øresund trains.

See the timetable and the leaflet entitled "**Cykler i tog**", which is available from all stations, for further details. The yellow posters of departure times on display at railway stations also indicate which trains take bikes.

A limited number of bikes can be taken on regional buses outside the Copenhagen area and some long-distance coaches. Finally, bikes can be taken on all ferries.

The country code

If you take your bike off the cycle routes and public roads, it is a good idea to know the country code.

Cycling is permitted around the clock on roads and paths in public woods. Cycling is also permitted in private woods of more than 5 hectares in size, but only between 7

am and sunset, and then only on roads and surfaced paths. Cycling is permitted on all roads and surfaced paths in open countryside as well unless prohibited by a (legal) sign.

Sleeping in tents is only permitted on campsites and tent sites (unlike in Norway and Sweden, there is no general right of access to private land), and you must keep away from residential buildings in woods and open countryside. Fires may only be lit in designated places.

CYCLE ROUTE SIGNS

Cycle routes are signposted everywhere with a symbol depicting a white bike on a blue background. This symbol, used together with a number, name or logo, marks the route. This enables the signs to combine separate paths, forest tracks and public roads into routes. Route numbers and logos appear in a box, just like the route numbers on roads. The specific rules for signposting are explained in "Vejregler for vejvisning på cykel- og vandreruter" published by the Road Directorate in 2000 and can be found on www.vejregler.dk.

National routes can be identified by the national colours: white numbers on a red background. They are numbered 1 to 15. Regional routes have white numbers on a blue background and are numbered 16-99. Both national and regional routes can have a name as well as a number. Finally, there are local routes with the same blue and white sign as regional routes, but numbered 100-999. Local routes can have a name or white logo instead of a number.

Remember the number/name/logo of the route so that it is easy to find your way using the signs. A sign without an arrow means that you have to go straight on. Route numbers are also shown on regional and local cycle maps, and are used in this and other guides.

National route



Regional route



Local route



Fingerpost for national route



Fingerpost for services



1 West Coast Route



560 km

The West Coast Route from Rudbøl to Skagen offers surf, vast beaches, the wind in your hair and the tang of seaweed and salt. The way the coastline changes from tidal flats to dunes and soft, sandy beaches is a perfect illustration of a coherent landscape on a grand scale. But there is more than just water and sand to look at. Away from the coast there are cultural landscapes, deserted dune plantations and lively campsites. Man's relationship with the sea is a constant theme. The route is best cycled from south to north with the southwest wind at your back. Wide tyres are recommended for the gravel tracks.

With the bleating of sheep and cries of birds for company, follow the West Coast Route along the **Vadehavet** (Wadden Sea) past the Højer Sluse floodgate to Esbjerg. There is shelter from the wind on the car-free tracks that the route follows on terraces along the dikes, but you have to go up onto the dike to see the Wadden Sea, where birds feed in large and small flocks when low tide opens up the ocean's larder.

The Wadden Sea is one of Northern Europe's most important wetlands. All sorts of rare birds rest there en route from Scandinavia to the big wide world. You may be lucky enough to see one of the small number of Danish storks shuttling back and forth between nest and larder. The route also crosses the Varde Å, the only river in Northern Europe to be influenced by tides. But before then there is an opportunity for some exciting island hopping:

Romø can be reached without getting your feet wet or risking seasickness, as there is a causeway. At Toftum in the north of the island you can visit Kommandørgården, an old sea captain's house that has been turned into a museum about the days when many of the island's men went whaling, etc., on the high seas. The whales'

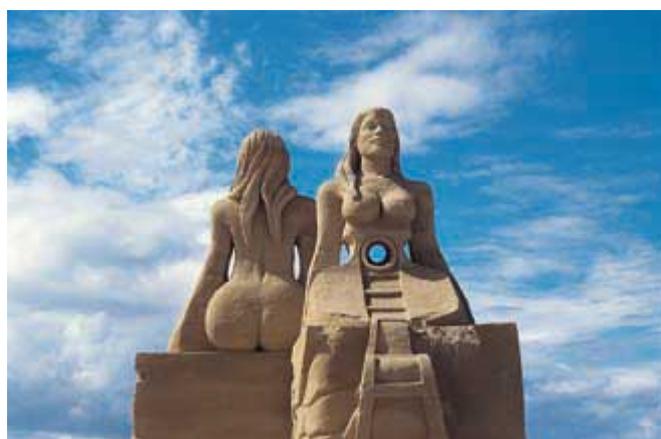


jawbones they brought home were used as garden fences, as can be seen at Juvre, a kilometre to the north. In the middle of the island lies the tourist resort of Lakolk, which has changed somewhat since the parson from Skærbæk opened the first seaside hotel in 1898. Back then the guests crossed to the island by boat and were taken to the hotel in a horse-drawn train. Traces can still be seen of the old rails that ran across the moor between Kongsmark and Lakolk.

Cycle route on the beach

There are no great distances to cycle on **Mandø**, but you can find out what life is like on a small island, enjoy nature and discover history in an old skipper's house dating back to 1831. Don't try cycling over – take the Mandø Bus, i.e. the tractor from Vester Vedsted, instead.

Fanø is reached by ferry from Esbjerg. Follow Regional Route 5 south straightaway on the broad path along the road. To get to Sønderho, go through Rindby and the dune plantation. The well-preserved fishermen's cottages and skippers' houses of this intimate village in the dunes offer a rare idyll in the Denmark of today. Continue from **Esbjerg** past the 9-metre sculpture by Svend Wiig entitled "Man Meets the Sea". As it passes through the counties of Ringkøbing and Viborg, the route is characterised by dune-covered tongues of land, which divide the harsh west coast from the gentler fjords behind, where many species of bird flourish.



Sand Sculpture Festival in Blokhus

The **Holmsland** spit divides the harsh west coast from the gentle fjord behind, where many species of bird flourish – don't forget your binoculars. You could also stop off at Abelines Gård in Haurvig, where you can soak up the atmosphere of a wreck master's house in the old days and enjoy a cup of coffee. The farmstead was built in 1854-71 and Abeline lived there alone with her five children from when her husband died in 1904 until her own death in 1957.

Further on in **Søndervig** you pass lots of beautiful old holiday cottages. The first seaside hotel was built there in 1884. This is where you will also start to notice concrete bunkers on the beach, scattered like big, weathered sugar lumps along the coast between there and Skagen. They were part of the Germans' Atlantic Wall, defensive fortifications built in 1943-45.

After a number of bird sanctuaries you arrive at the wind-swept spit that is home to the village of **Thyborøn**, where you just have to see the unique Sneglehus (Snail House) on Sneglevej (Snail Road), which is decorated with all good things from the sea both inside and out. It also houses the country's largest collection of ships in bottles.

The distinctive features of the coastal landscape in the form of steep cliffs can be experienced at **Bulbjerg** and further on at **Rubjerg**, where Mårup Kirke can be seen teetering on the brink. As the prevailing philosophy is to let nature take its course, the church and the skeletons in its small cemetery will soon fall into the sea.

The forces of nature play a major role in the lives of fishermen, and at **Stenbjerg** and **Vorupør** they have made do without a harbour for many years by pulling their fishing boats up onto dry land – a laborious task, but a picturesque sight. The riches of the sea can be studied at Nordsømuseum (North Sea Museum) in Hirtshals.

Picturesque is also a good word to describe **Svinkløv Badehotel**, a wooden seaside hotel painted grey and standing solid and windswept among the dunes. Inside you will find the loveliest of pastel colours and a fantastic light off the sea. Surprisingly enough, there is a small beech wood growing in the back garden.

Every desert has its oases, and the same applies to the fertile **Fosdal** valley with its fragrant honeysuckle a little to the north.

The West Coast Route ends on Hulsigstien on its way into **Skagen** near the Tilsandede Kirke (Buried Church), which is an excellent illustration of the theme of this route: man's battle to gain a foothold in the face of harsh nature. **Råbjerg Mile** is an impressive desert-like area of dunes that migrates 20 metres a year.

North Sea Cycle Route

The West Coast Route forms part of the European North Sea Cycle Route, which was the first of 12 European routes to be opened in its entirety and has a total length of around 6,000 km. As the name suggests, it follows the coast of the North Sea and offers everything in the way of coastal landscapes from beaches to cliffs, as well as bathing and camping amenities, and fishing culture ancient and modern. It is signposted as National Route 1 in Denmark, Norway, Scotland, England and Holland.

As well as including the entire West Coast Route, the Danish section also covers part of the East Coast Route from Skagen to Grenaa, making around 800 km in total in Denmark.

A free map leaflet is available from the county councils, while Turistgruppen Vestjylland (+45 7528 7400) sells a Cycline map book: "På cykel langs Jyllands vestkyst". See also www.northsea-cycle.com.

2 Hanstholm – Copenhagen



420 km

This route takes you from the country's largest fishing port in Hanstholm to the old trading port in the Danish capital. It runs from the wild North Sea through farmland and woods, past manors and along beaches, to Copenhagen. It offers a cross-section through the varied Danish countryside, making it a perfect introduction for Danish or foreign tourists who want to experience Denmark on two wheels.

Cycle south from windswept Hanstholm in the shelter of Vildtreservatet (the Game Preserve), where dunes, moorland, lakes and bogs provide the setting for a wealth of rare birds and other animals.

South of Thisted the route turns and crosses Limfjord to **Mors**, which, with all its different types of countryside, is said to be God's model for Jutland. The north of the island has steep moler cliffs, Hanklit near the Gullerup Gamle Færgeskro inn and Feggeklit, where there is a ferry across Feggesund. The south of the island is characterised by agriculture, as well as meadows, bird sanctuaries and beaches.

Route 2 runs straight across the island, but you can also opt to make an extra loop around the island on the Solruten or Sun Route – yes, it really is called that, even when it is raining!

After leaving Mors the route winds its way through the labyrinths of Limfjord and into the mild valleys of Jutland. Jernbanestien (the Railway Path) across the **Salling** peninsula between Glyngøre and Skive allows you to experience the agricultural land behind the towns, and the road down to Viborg takes you along the edge of Hjarbæk Fjord.



You skirt the lakes at Viborg and join a nice, comfortable railway path that goes through Bruunshåb and Vejrum. Before long a strange geological formation appears like "The Flying Dutchman" in the mist. This is **Ø**, which means island in Danish. It may once have been an island, but is now a hill in the middle of the river valley. At the top you will find heather, blueberries and a great view.

On the summit of Ø between Viborg and Randers



Fussingø Forest

Before you get to Randers, you pass the desolate forests of **Fussingø** and Slottet, a castle on a peninsula in the lake that dates right back to 1555. In **Randers** you can visit Regnskoven, a tropical zoo, before entering a new country.

Djursland, the "nose" of Denmark, awaits you with its many country estates, which start to appear right from Estruplund. The route takes you a bit inland via Vivild, but you can make detours to Djursland's beaches such as the one at Fjerllerup, where there are small galleries and souvenir shops. A little further on you pass Mejlgård Slot, a castle that is impressively situated on a small island surrounded by a moat. There is a restaurant in the stables, and a good dinner will taste particularly good after a day of pedalling. But there will also be an opportunity to enjoy a good meal a little further on at Søstrup Kloster, a convent that also offers accommodation. The nuns run the establishment, but have built a new convent next door for peace and quiet.

Grenaa has something quite different to attract visitors, Kattagatcentret, an aquarium where you can come face to face with swift sharks before having a rest in the dunes to the south of the town, for instance.

There are more country estates to visit as the route heads south. Pop your head in at the gates of the substantial castle of **Katholm Slot**. But take care to be over the hills and far away before darkness falls, for every night a team of four headless horses drives into the courtyard as a consequence of a certain Helle Trolle, the lady of the house, selling her soul to the devil and being carried off. The route continues over rolling hills in perfect cycling country to Herregården **Rugård**. There is no access to this manor, but you pass the village pond, which the lord of the manor used for ducking witches in the 18th century.

Down the road in **Ebeltoft** you should park your bike for a while in order to enjoy the narrow, cobbled streets and half-timbered houses in the well-preserved town centre. The town was granted a municipal charter in 1301. Fregatten Jylland, an old wooden frigate, makes an impressive sight in the harbour, and you can pay it a visit before taking the hydrofoil across the Kattegat.

The pedalling resumes at **Sjællands Odde**, but it is virtually the same as sailing, as you can sometimes see water on both sides. From Nykøbing Sj. you can take the Isefjordstien (Isefjord Path) to Rørvig if you want to see a little more.

A really good, old-fashioned ferry will chug you across the mouth of the fjord to **Hundested**. There is currently some doubt as to whether the Kulhuse ferry will be resurrected so that you can cycle through Nordskoven to Jægersprise and see the thousand-year-old Kongeeg (King's Oak). Otherwise you will have to follow Fjordstien (Route 40) through Frederiksværk to **Frederikssund** – the town with a Viking play in the summer.

The route now heads for the capital through the gently rolling countryside of Zealand around Ganløse and Buresø before encountering **Farum** and then slavishly following the motorway to Rådhuspladsen in the heart of Copenhagen, from where you can explore the city.

Copenhagen

Copenhagen is the best capital city in the world when it comes to cycle paths. In the City of Copenhagen alone there are more than 300 km of cycle paths and the locals are enthusiastic cyclists.

There are also lots of good paths for excursions, including Vigerlevstien, which connects with National Route 9 by Vestvoldstien. Similarly, it is easy to cycle out into the countryside from Rådhuspladsen on National Route 6 through Amager Fælled and Vestamager. The City of Copenhagen is in the process of implementing "green cycle routes". See the City's website for more information.

3 Hærvej Route



From Skagen you can cycle over the highland ridge of Jyske Ås and around the hills of Rebild Bakker to Viborg, where you join the historical section of the Hærvej Route and follow it to Padborg. Travellers have been using successive sections of road on Den jyske Højderyg (the Jutland Ridge), where there are no rivers to cross, for more than a thousand years. Together these sections of road are known as Hærvejen (Hovedvejen) or Old Military Road. Using your bike as a time machine, you can experience the presence of history with ancient burial mounds, the rune stones of the Vikings and medieval churches. There is also varied countryside to enjoy between the fertile moraine hills of East Jutland and the flat moorland of West Jutland.

In **Skiveren** the Hærvej Route splits off from the West Coast Route and heads south through Vendsyssel and Himmerland, passing through beautiful, protected glacial landscapes, including the heather- and tree-covered hills of Tolne Bakker, Jyske Ås and Hammer Bakker. At the southern end of Jyske Ås you pass **Dronninglund Slot**, a castle dating back to 1268 that was once a Benedictine convent. The County of North Jutland has an exhibition on the castle and Jyske Ås there.

Between Aalborg and Viborg the route takes you up hill and down dale through Rold Skov forest with **Rebild Bakker** and Store Økssø lake. It passes through Volsted, Denmark's best-preserved village of its type, with the buildings grouped around an open area of common grazing land. At **Klejtrup Sø** you can go a long way on the lake's World Map before heading into the County of Viborg.

From **Viborg** you follow the cycle path along the moorland plantation and encounter on its fringes a granite road roller standing on end. Words written by Peter Seeberg wind round the drum and tell of the people who used Hærvejen: "hucksters, warriors, the pious, the good, the bad, etc." Walking around the road roller and trying to make sense of the words, it is easy to be caught up in the magic of the time machine. And then you have to watch out for evil wayfarers, as shortly afterwards the route passes close to Røverhøje or Robber Mounds.

You soon reach the dramatic landscapes of the **Dollerup Bakker** hills, where the glaciers stopped. The large differences in height between the hilltop and the bottom of Hald Sø lake can be seen from the exhibition in the barn at Hald Hovedgård home farm and then out in the real world in the beautiful hills.

At **Vrads Sande** the historical mood is heightened by the sunken roads and moors. Vrads Købmandshandel, the general store, has become an information centre for cyclists, and you can camp there or arrange to stay in a private room. Halfway along Hærvejen you meet a Bronze Age man at **Det Store Vandskel** (the Great Watershed). In the burial mound he rattles his bones and marvels at our two-wheeled vehicles. He walked here 3,000 years ago.

Maybe the raindrops dripping from the tree remember the trouble the Bronze Age man had making headway. After all, the drops may have passed the ridge several times on their journey between sea, sky and earth. These drops of water are the start of the Skjernå river, which has its source in a small lake nearby. Here they combine with other drops, and lots of small rivulets becomes the river with the most water in Denmark. If they had fallen a few hundred metres to the east, they could have looked forward to the longest journey a drop of water can make in a Danish watercourse, travelling 160 km down the Gudenå river.

You now trundle south on the winding gravel road, which over the years has dug itself into the terrain. In the meantime the sun has come out in the southern sky and the light reflects off the still wet tarmac road, which makes up the last stretch into **Øster Nykirke**. In the heat haze and looking into the harsh light, we see cloaked pilgrims disappearing behind the hill on their way to Santiago de Compostela or maybe just up to the holy spring of Saint Peter opposite the church.



There is not much curative water here for a thirsty cyclist, however, so the next stop is **Harresø Kro**, one of the oldest inns on Hærvejen. There are also historical inns in Tøsby, Bække and Stursbøl. Back in 1396 Queen Margrethe I decreed that an inn should be built every fourth (Danish) mile, or about every 30 km.

Øster Nykirke – a landmark on Hærvejen at 137 metres above sea level

From the inn in Tøsby you can make a detour to **Jelling**, where the rune stones of Gorm the Old and Harald Bluetooth stand between the church and the domed burial mounds. The rune stones are also known as Denmark's Birth Certificate, because they are the first written record of the Kingdom of Denmark.

A little further south it is worth making another small detour to visit **Bindeballe Købmandsgaard** by the disused railway line. This unique shop has been kept by Mr Jensen for a number of years and is both a living museum and cosy meeting place where time stands still. The adverts still tell you that "Richs is the one to drink", but "Danmarks is good" (Richs and Danmarks were rival brands of coffee substitute). You can have lunch in the courtyard surrounded by lovely old advertising signs. In the station building the County of Vejle has an exhibition on Hærvejen and the disused Vandel railway.

The next stop is **Bække** in the County of Ribe, which is just a small place, but thanks to the efforts of numerous locals can offer tent sites, private rooms, tourist information, a Hærvej exhibition, a Hærvej stone, rune stones, etc. But before taking in the town, you should linger at **Klebæk Høje**, a very atmospheric ridge to the north with Bronze Age mounds, a ship tumulus from the Viking era and ancient wheel tracks.

The landscape flattens out slightly as you cycle south into the County of South Jutland. You can see the extensive meadows of the Kongeå valley from Læborg Kirke onwards.

Frihedsbroen (the Freedom Bridge) with its red and white railings takes you across the old Danish-German border (1864-1920) and down into Jels, where a Dutch windmill and bronze statue of a girl compete for the title of town landmark.

The journey south from Jels used to be very difficult because of large, densely wooded areas filled with robbers, but nowadays you can trundle peacefully through **Stursbøl** Plantation. You can experience the atmosphere of the past if you are lucky enough to get one of the two rooms at the reopened inn in Stursbøl, Café Ellegaard.

You will rarely encounter a bridge without there being an inn to go with it. The **Immervad Bro** bridge is one of the well-known crossings. However, the old inn, which used to be famous for its pea soup, has been replaced by a tent site and B&B. Further south you come to the **Poulsbro** bridge with its stone portal, which has no mortar of any sort to hold it together.

In contrast, the inn has long been closed. The same applies to the **Gejlå Bro** bridge, where the Bommerlund Kro inn burnt down many years ago, schnapps and all. Instead you will have to have a word with "the speaking stones" to the south. They include road duty stones, which specified which section of road a certain farm had to maintain. You soon reach the **German border**, but not necessarily the end of your journey.

The European pilgrims' route

The Hærvej Route can be continued all the way to Northern Spain. This is old news as it was the Icelandic monk Nicolaus who wrote in a 12th-century travel guide that you had to sail from Iceland to Aalborg, go to Viborg, from where it was a week's walk to Hedeby, and then on to Santiago de Compostela, where St James the Apostle is buried.

The famous Pilgrims' Way in Spain – El Camino de Santiago – has been combined with the Pilgrims' Route to Trondheim to create a European cycle route (a good 5,000 km). The route follows Hærvejen in Denmark – see www.hærvej.dk. From Padborg to Hamburg it is signposted as Heerweg/Ochsenweg. See the guide and map book entitled "Ochsenweg, Radwanderkarte 1:75.000" published by Bielefelder Verlag.

4 Søndervig – Copenhagen



310 km

From the flattest part of West Jutland in the County of Ringkøbing the route crosses the country's highest peaks in Det midtjyske Søhøjland (the Lake District), and you will really experience the change in the landscape at Den jyske Højderyg (the Jutland Ridge). Halfway you arrive at the "world's smallest metropolis", Århus, with its many historical buildings and evocative open-air museum, "Den Gamle By". You can enjoy modern life in the city's many cafés and at the Århus Musikhus concert centre, for example. As it crosses Zealand, the route continues on minor roads, some of which follow the old route taken by the Danish kings on their way from Kalundborg to Copenhagen past the Viking towns of Lejre and Roskilde.

Between Søndervig and Ringkøbing you can experience **Cykelvejen**, a historical path created by the Tourist Association in 1920. A toll was levied to pay for its upkeep. There was no road to Søndervig until 1935. Gammelsogn Kirke, which the congregation used to get to by boat, stands on its own by the path.

In **Ringkøbing** there are quaint streets leading down to the fjord, and in the evening you can hear the watchmen singing. Continue on the path along the fjord past the humming wind turbines.

If the wind turbines are turning, your bike wheels certainly will be as well as you head down towards the **Skjernådal** valley. Here the route has been diverted as part of the Skjern Å river project, the largest countryside project ever undertaken in Denmark, which involves 2,200 hectares of new countryside. First the river was straightened to provide more agricultural land, and now the meanders are being put back in to make the whole area more attractive and accessible to birds, cyclists, etc. Two rope ferries are being installed to allow people to cross the broad river delta.

There are various cycle signs to be seen at **Skjern Kirke**, but also an old stone signpost that explains how in the golden years of the early 20th century the next part of the route used to be the main road between Ringkøbing and Kolding. Milestones can be seen on the south side of the road on the way to Borris.

After Arnborg the route arrives at a lunar landscape at **Søby Sø** lake, where 2,000 people mined lignite between 1940 and 1970. A museum in a former miner's dwelling tells the story.

You have been cycling across flat plains since Skjernådal and are now approaching the glacial Søhøjlandet (Lake District). With good gears on your bike you can look forward to a three-dimensional landscape in which woods, lakes, towns, hills and fields are constantly appearing and disappearing. The route enters the County of Århus through **Vrads** and **Bryrup**. There is also the option of travelling between these two towns on the old steam railway.

Continue through **Addit**, **Gammel Rye** and **Ry** in the picturesque, rolling countryside. Cycling the last stretch into Århus is an easy matter on the excellent path along Brabrand Sø lake before coming to a standstill "downtown" by the river, the Århus Å.

After a break on the ferry you arrive in **Kalundborg**, where you will be struck by the unusual 12th-century castle church with its five towers.

The route continues on peaceful minor roads along the old royal way, which passes through Tølløse. At **Lejre** you can visit Lejre Forsøgscentre, an archaeological



experimental centre where you can experience life in the Iron Age, etc., and admire Ledreborg Slot, a grand manor house with a long avenue.

Lejre Forsøgscentre

Roskilde is dominated by the Domkirke (Cathedral), where 38 Danish kings and queens have been laid to rest. You can also visit the Vikingeskibsmuseet (Viking Ship Museum) at the head of Roskilde Fjord. Route 4 (and 6) heads in the direction of Køge Bugt for a quick trip through Strandparken with its 7 km or so of "new" beach. See Route 2 for Copenhagen.

5 East Coast Route



The East Coast Route clings to the projecting promontories, capes, peninsulas and headlands of the landscape like an exquisitely embroidered border. On the ride further along the east coast you can enjoy the soft caress of the wind and salty kiss of the sea. From time to time you follow fjord paths, where oaks and beeches lean perilously towards the sea in a timeless landscape. At the head of the fjords you find old market towns with absorbing museums.

Skagen is about summer at the top of Denmark. Here you can stand with your feet in different seas and then warm yourself on the herring boxes in the harbour before turning your handlebars south.

In **Frederikshavn** you will see the white Krudttårn (Gunpowder Tower) from the days of the naval hero Tordenskjold close to the harbour, which has a ferry service to Læsø. **Sæby** also has old buildings, quaint narrow streets and a good bathing beach.

In **Himmerland** the route turns onto the Hadsundstien path past Lille Vildmose bog, which has supplied sphagnum moss to many gardens in Europe. A bridge at Hadsund and a ferry at Udbyhøj take you across gleaming fjords towards **Djursland**, Jutland's "nose", with its many country estates – see Route 2.

After Ebeltoft the route enters the **Mols Bjerger** hills, which you climb via Femmøller. Here several gravel roads head off into the beautiful glacial landscape with its grazing sheep and cattle and silent outlines of juniper bushes. There is an imposing view from Agri Bavnehøj (137 m). Outside Knebel you can admire the country's largest stone circle, Poskær Stenhus, while in Knebel there is a monolith at the crossroads with carvings of the well-known tales of the "wise men of Mols".

The route rounds Århus Bugt, passing **Kalø Slotsruin**, castle ruins forming an island at the end of a long tongue of land. After Rønde you enter the capital of Jutland, Århus – see Route 4.



Car-free path by Horsens Fjord

Spinneys and country estates remain on the menu as you head south and encounter the fertile fjords around **Horsens**, **Vejle** and **Kolding**. In several places paths run by the water on disused railway lines. Kolding has plenty of art to offer at the Koldinghus fortress and Trapholt Museet.

Christiansfeld, founded in 1773 by the Moravian Brethren is a very special place. Gudsageren (God's Acre) is an evocative churchyard with straight rows of simple headstones. The town's sweetest tourist attraction is gingerbread. You can choose between three shops, all of which claim to have the most authentic Christiansfeld gingerbread.

Haderslev, with its many old houses dating back to the 16th century, is also worth a stop. In **Aabenraa** you can go shopping on the undulating pedestrian street before following the last stage of the route, with the island of Als to port, down to **Sønderborg**, where you can really feel the presence of history in the castle fortress.

6 Esbjerg – Copenhagen



330 km

The route runs from the Englandsbåden ferry terminal in Esbjerg, across the Odense Å river to Tivolisøen lake in Copenhagen. Along the way you experience the farming landscape of Denmark, with black-and-white cows in Jutland and billowing fields of grain on Funen and Zealand. Odense has several cycle routes running through its centre, including one along the river. The town has been named the national cycling town of Denmark, but has other attractions too, including H.C. Andersens Hus og Museum (the Hans Christian Andersen House and Museum), as well as the café life around Brandts Klædefabrik, an old textile mill that has been turned into a cultural centre. Zealand is Viking country, and you will pass close to Trelleborg and Roskilde.

In **Esbjerg** you can visit Fiskeri- og Søfartsmuseet (the Museum of Fishing and Shipping) with its "sealarium" before heading off through the flat countryside of the County of Ribe on the lanes of the Holsted Ådal valley, passing anglers and birdwatchers. You cross Hærvejen (the Old Military Road) at **Vejen** and the town's Kunstmuseum (Art Gallery), after which you enter the softer landscape of East Jutland on your way to Kolding – see Route 5. As you cross the **Lillebæltsbroen** bridge, you have a great view down into the deep.



Outing on a green path in Odense

On Funen both the language and hills are gentler than elsewhere in the country. You can cross the island quickly on Route 6, and the **Langesøstien** path will take you into the centre of Odense, birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen and a favourite with cyclists, without interference from cars.

The road to Nyborg passes through the idyllic Davinde with its beautiful old village meeting place. **Nyborg** was the capital of the country in the Middle Ages. Enjoy the castle with a walk on the ramparts and visit to the medieval tower known as "Den hvide Jomfru" (the White Maiden).

You have to take your bike on the train to cross Storbælt (the Great Belt). On Zealand the Viking theme starts as you pass **Trelleborg**, which lies a little way up the Tudeå river. Further east you skirt **Slagelse** by the castle ruins of Antvorskov Slotsruin, originally a monastery founded by the Order of St John and dating back to 1165.

The route now steals through beautiful spinneys before arriving at the open-air museum of **Kongskilde Friluftsgård** on the north shore of Tystrup Sø lake, where you can go for a swim or simply explore the dramatic landscape created here about 15,000 years ago during the last ice age when several glaciers met. The open-air museum has a tent site, youth hostel, restaurant and information centre.

You continue along the edge of the Susådalen valley to Alsted Mølle with its mill, where the route turns north and passes to the west of **Ringsted**. South of the mill you will see the mound known as **Hagbards Høj**. It is named after Prince Hagbard, who was hanged for paying a visit to Signe, the daughter of the local king, Slettekong Siger, disguised in women's clothes. But that was long ago – around 300 AD according to the legend.

Another king gave his name to **Haraldsted**, where you now skirt the lakes of Langesø and Haraldsted Sø, which is also long. Your next stop might be on Line 3 of Sporvognsmuseet (the Tram Museum) at **Skjoldenæsholm**. The trams run on track left over from Den midtsjællandske Jernbane, a disused railway.

Before long Route 6 joins Route 4 (see Route 4) and passes **Roskilde** before ending on Rådhuspladsen in Copenhagen after a nice approach through the greenery of **Vestamager** and Amager Fælled. There is a surprising view of the city's towers from this green "savannah". See Route 2 for **Copenhagen**.

7 Sjællands Odde – Rødby



From Sjællands Odde you follow tarmacked lanes across West Zealand through picturesque villages lying among cultivated fields. With no major climbs, the route is ideal for children, and you pass the Sommerland Sjælland and BonBon Land amusement parks before crossing the Storstrømsbroen bridge and passing Knuthenborg Safaripark on your way to Rødbyhavn. Just off the Østersøstien (Baltic Path) is the Lalandia tropical aquapark. Rødbyhavn has a ferry service to Puttgarden on the German island of Fehmarn. And in a few years there may even be a bridge.

After the hills of the point the route is really flat as it crosses the reclaimed land of **Lammefjorden**, where carrots grow "beneath the surface of the sea", before becoming more undulating at the **Tystrup-Bavelse Søerne** lakes, where you pass the open-air museum of Kongskilde Friluftsgård (see Route 6).

To the south lies **Gunderslevholm** with its church on the banks of the Susåen river. Cycle route and river alike wind their way through the countryside. If you fancy, trundle down to Holløsebro with the picturesque **Holløse Mølle** mill.

Before the main road into Næstved you can turn left through the wood, Friheden, to **Herlufsholm** on the banks of the Susåen. It was originally a Benedictine monastery, which went by the name of Skovkloster, and dates back to 1135. Herluf Trolle and Birgitte Gøye set up the boarding school in 1565.

Næstved was founded around 400 AD at the mouth of the Susåen. The name means "clearing on a headland". The town's mascot is Fladsåtrolden, a troll who stands by Munkebakke, a hill created by the last sand in his sack, which he intended to pour over the town's noisy church bells.



South of the town the route goes past **Gavnø Slot**, which started life as a pirates' castle in the 13th century. In the early 15th century, Queen Margrethe founded a convent, and it is now one of Denmark's most beautiful rococo palaces with lovely flower gardens.

Gavnø Slot

South of **Vester Egesborg** there is a magnificent view over Dybsø Fjord. In days gone by condemned criminals had the same view from Stejlebakken – just before they were executed! The last victim was a young girl, who was beheaded in 1850 for killing her newborn child.

Now the yellow tower of **Køng Kirke** appears on the horizon. The church tower is classical and dates from the late 18th century. The Køng Fabrik factory was founded in 1774 as a spinning mill to exploit local flax production. West of the road lies Svinø, which was named after the porpoises (marsvin in Danish) fished between Svinø and Dybsø.

The symbol of **Vordingborg**, Gåsetårnet (Goose Tower), actually has a golden goose on top. The ruins are the remains of a castle built by King Valdemar the Great in the 12th century to protect the town against the Wends. You can climb the tower, which was built by Valdemar Atterdag in 1362-65.

Masnedøbroen and **Storstrømsbroen** are from the days before anyone thought of prohibiting cycling on bridges, so enjoy the view and the "rush". The route turns off the main road and heads down to **Vålse Vig**.

Guldborg welcomes you to Lolland – not with gold (guld in Danish) perhaps, but with green woods. Further on you will see a sculpture of two "beet girls" on the square in **Sakskøbing**, while the town's famous smiling water tower can be found on Nystedvej.

Maribo is a lovely little provincial town with its old, mansion-like town hall, Domkirken (Cathedral) and a pleasant green running down to Maribo Sø lake. The route continues west round Søndersø lake and then down into Rødbyhavn on **Holebystien**.

8 South Sea Route (Rudbøl – Møn)



From the flat Vadehav (Wadden Sea) in the west to the chalk cliffs of Møn, you experience first the border country of the south and then the glittering southern islands of Als, Funen, Tåsinge, Langeland, Lolland, Falster, Bogø and Møn. The sign for National Route 8 is a distinctive feature of the islands of southern Denmark, which have always been one of the country's most attractive areas for cycling as land and water alternate – and you get the chance to take a break on a ferry or two.

From the west coast at **Rudbøl** you can go on a journey across Jutland and back through history on the South Sea Route. Cycling along the border in the flat countryside of Southern Jutland, you pass through the towns of **Møgeltønder**, **Schackenberg** and **Tønder**, which should be negotiated at walking pace so that you can enjoy the pretty cobbled streets with the gossip mirrors of their provincial houses.

The route reflects history before and after the Plebiscite of 1920, which reunited Southern Jutland with Denmark. The Gendarmstien footpath along **Flensburg Fjord** and over to Als also has tales to tell about this period of Danish history, which can be studied at the Dybbølcentret (the Dybbøl Centre) in Sønderborg.

You continue across Als past the solid structure of **Broager Kirke**. Inside the church you can see an enormous wood carving of St George fighting the dragon. The South Sea Route makes use of the ferry to cross from **Fynshav** to **Bøjden** and continues through Horneland, which has the only round church on Funen and Hvedholm Slot. This castle is now a hotel that can offer guests four-poster beds in tower rooms.

From **Faaborg** you zigzag along the coast to **Svendborg** on minor roads. From here you can take the ferry "Helge" to Tåsinge past Valdemars Slot (Valdemar's Castle), where you cycle straight through the gatehouses to the palace courtyard, where there is a tea pavilion at the end of the lake. The castle was built by King Christian IV for his son Valdemar in around 1640 and is now a museum. Before long you reach Nørreskoven, which provided the setting for the tragic love story of circus princess Elvira Madigan and Sixten Sparre, a Swedish nobleman.

After a few humming wind turbines on Siø, you arrive on **Langeland**, whose droll place names and curious hat-shaped hills certainly make it worth a mass. The South Sea Route continues across this long island to Spodsberg, from where you take the ferry to Lolland.

From the jaws of the ferry in **Tårs** you are quickly led away from the cars and out through Sandby. At Hellenæs you cycle on a narrow dike through a small grove and into Nakskov by the back door.

Nakskov is an enterprising town with lots of big companies, but it also has narrow, atmospheric streets and good cycling amenities.

At **Halsted Kloster** you can visit the park of this former large landed estate and Benedictine monastery, which dates back to 1177.

Birket Kirke, Lolland's highest church, enjoys a beautiful location and its black bell tower, built in around 1350, is one of Denmark's oldest wooden buildings. Ferries sail from **Kragenæs** Harbour to Fejø and Femø, and to the east you can see the surprisingly hilly landscape of **Ravnsby Bakke**.

You now have to follow the road to **Bandholm**. There are views of the sea in a few places and you can see the island of Lindholm, where in 1906 Jacob Ellehammer became the first European to fly.

You can arrive in Maribo at full steam on the old railway, or you can pay to cycle through the impressive **Knuthenborg Safaripark**. The kids have their own little amusement park in the form of "Småland", which is laid out as a model of Lolland and Falster in the sea and offers all sorts of activities. Leave by the Maglemerporten gate just after the cheeky monkeys instead of cycling in among the wild animals, and continue on your way to Maribo and Saksøbing – see Route 7.

Trees on both sides of the road form a canopy over the cycle route before you reach the country estate around Krenkerup with its yellow, three-storey manor house, moat and spired towers. **Krenkerup** is Lolland's largest and stateliest manor and dates right back to 1367. There is no access to the house.

In Sundby you can visit **Middelaldercentret** (The Medieval Centre) and wander along the village street and harbour – an evocative setting from the late 14th century. Jousts, etc., are held there.

Continue from **Nykøbing F** (see Route 9) along Guldborgsund and the protecting dike, then on through **Hasselø** with its distinctive buildings and glimpses of the straits. This former island was settled by Dutch people, who felt at home in the flat landscape.

From **Marielyst** and Denmark's best beach, which is 20 km long, continue north through an area of holiday cottages and out into the open countryside. You then ride along the coast of East Falster, where beech trees lean towards the salt water. In some places the tree roots have been laid bare and are reminiscent of cuttlefish bones. It is as if the trees are trying to run out into the water.

The roots of **Corselitze Gods** extend a long way back into history, but the present manor house in the palace style was built in 1775-77 on the basis of drawings by the court architect, Andreas Kirkerup. Remember to have a look at Generalens Lysthus (the General's Summerhouse) down by the seaside wood – a neat little tea pavilion. At **Pomlenakke** you should stop at the café on the cliff. In **Hesnæs** the houses look funny. This is because they are clad with reeds.

After Næsgård there is a view over land and water before you reach the slightly creepy **Grønsund**. You can imagine how the disgraced noblewoman Marie Grubbe rowed the author Ludvig Holberg and other celebrities across the straits when she was the ferrywoman there more than 250 years ago. She lived in Borrehuset, where there is a monument to her.



Forest ranger's house in the Corselitze forests

You now cross from Stubbekøbing to **Bogø** by the little ferry and then ride across the causeway to Møn, which is "dimpled with twisty roads". **Fanefjord Kirke** is the main landmark in the southwest of the island. Inside the church you can see frescoes by the Elmelunde master. Just to the south is Denmark's largest long barrow, Grønsalen, from the Stone Age.

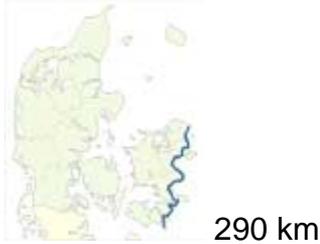
The route takes you north around the cove to **Stege**, which was granted a municipal charter in 1268. The name of the town comes from the stakes that were set in the seaward approach to protect the town against pirates. A 15th-century town gate is still standing.

Møns Klint is an area of outstanding natural beauty in itself with the white pinnacles and cliffs behind the woodland of Store Klinteskov with its many burial mounds. The cliffs look highest when you make it down all the steps to the narrow pebbled beach and look back up. In the woods you will find the hotel and restaurant of Liselund Ny Slot as well as a romantic garden and the old manor house.

Baltic Route

The South Sea Route ends a little abruptly at Møns Klint, but you can cycle back along the south coast of Zealand and Funen and the east coast of Jutland. A guidebook has been published for this circular trip of 800 km under the name of the Baltic Route, with clear directions on signposted national, regional and local routes: "Østersøruten – Danmarks smukkeste cykelrute". Further information can be obtained from Fyntour (+45 6613 1337) or on www.bikeandsea-denmark.com. In future the Baltic Route will form part of the European Baltic Sea Cycle Route (8,000 km).

9 Elsinore – Gedser



National Route 9 connects with Sweden and Germany, and forms part of the international cycle route between the cultural cities of Copenhagen and Berlin. The journey down through Zealand, Møn and Falster is very Danish, however, with winding roads, arable land, country estates and castles. The route follows the east coast of Zealand past Stevns Klint. It also skirts Møn and Bøge before continuing along the beautiful east coast of Falster, where there are picturesque beech trees on the shore, down to Denmark's southernmost point at Gedser.

The northern part of the route bears the stamp of urban development with views across Sundet (the Sound) to Ven, Glumslövs Backar and Barsebäck in Sweden. Some of this section follows Kystbanestien (the Coast Railway Path) behind Strandvejen (the Coast Road).

At **Humblebæk**, Sletten Havn harbour and Louisiana, the museum of modern art, are worth a visit, while in **Rungsted** Karen Blixen's house is open to the public, giving visitors a fascinating glimpse into the author's African universe.

The route also takes a scenic course along the edge of the **Dyrehaven** deer park with views of Eremitageslottet (the Eremitage Hunting Lodge).

Route 9 bypasses Copenhagen on green paths, including one along **Vestvolden**, ramparts built to defend Copenhagen that became obsolete before they were completed.

South of Copenhagen you pass through **Strandparken**, where 7 km of beach and 3-metre-high sand dunes have been built up. It is also home to the Arken art gallery, which lies there like a stranded ship. The concrete pillars on either side of Ishøj Marina are meant to represent Arken's rigging and masts, which came off when it ran aground.



Køge is a well-preserved medieval town with merchants' houses and a harbour. South of Køge you follow the coast of **Stevns** across the Trykkevælde Å river, which together with its 500-metre-wide valley and the Stevns Å river demarcates the Stevns peninsula. As both sides will tell you, the important thing is to live on the right side!

Cycle path south of Køge: the Tøserunden women-only fun ride en route to Stevns

Follow the zigzag roads out to **Strøby Ladeplads** and on through the coastal woods if you like. Gjorslev Slot was built in 1396 by the Bishop of Roskilde, Peder Jensen Lodehat, who was Queen Margrethe I's chancellor. The castle is an unusual cross-

shaped building with a 30-metre tower in the middle, as if it were a cathedral. It is built of limestone taken from the local cliffs.

The cliffs of **Stevns Klint** extend from Gjorslev to Rødvig, but are at their best between Mandehoved and Højerup. A nature centre has been set up in the former military area at Mandehoved. The dramatically sheer cliffs are best experienced in stormy weather when the tourists have gone home and you are standing alone on the "balcony" by the old church, whose cross plunged into the sea in 1928. You can watch the sea whipping spray against the greyish white cliffs and threatening the 60-million-year-old wall of chalk and the trees on top.

In Højerup you can visit Stevns Museum and the village pond where Huey, Dewey and Louie live – or Rip, Rap and Rup as they are known in Danish. Then the route glides on to **Rødvig** without further detours, past the warehouse by the harbour and the old flint kiln, which was formerly used to make powder for ceramic production.

The convent of **Vemmetofte Kloster** lies a short distance inland at the end of majestic avenues. It was turned into a home for unmarried ladies of rank by Princess Sofie Hedvig in 1735. The building is moated and the grounds and deer park are open to the public.

Fakse Ladeplads is the port for Fakse, or more precisely Fakse Kalkbrud, a limestone quarry that opened around 1870. Limestone has been quarried here since the Middle Ages. Back then the limestone was transported in horse-drawn carts, loaded into barges and then transferred to sailing ships.

The build-up of sediment in Præstø Fjord over 2,000 years has created a landscape that is reminiscent of West Jutland. The whole area was once covered by forest, but Swedish soldiers burnt the woods, and **Feddet** is now a varied area of natural beauty with heath, bogs and stunted pines. There is an excellent beach on the east side of the peninsula.

Northeast of Strandgård there is a redoubt from the war with England in 1807. A curious attraction is to be found half a kilometre into the woods by Leestrup Strand in the form of **Kludeegen**. The trunk of this oak tree is forked, allowing you to crawl through a hole. This is supposed to both cure you of illness and make you fertile. As you can see, it is the custom to hang up an item of clothing by way of an offering to the tree.

You round **Præstø Fjord**, where thatched houses look out over the water from the fringes of the wood. At the end of the Feddet peninsula you will see a line of trees known as "Tandbørsten" (the Tooth Brush) marking the horizon. Just before Præstø you will find the baroque castle of **Nysø**, which is in private ownership. One of the wings houses a museum with works by the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen.

Præstø is the "Pearl of South Jutland" with its uneven cobbles, lovely old buildings and inviting harbour. Its name, which translates into Priest Island, dates back to 1321, when the town came within the jurisdiction of the monastery at Skovkloster and really was an island. But the town does not seem to have been protected by

higher powers, as it was tormented by plague, floods and Swedes! It was burnt down six times.

South of Præstø Route 9 follows a new course on very narrow tarmacked roads through spinneys and small settlements to Sandvig and on to **Kalvehave**, which is reached just after the long village of Viemose.



Take care on the way into Stege, where there is no cycle path as yet. Then follow Route 8 (see Route 8) via Møn, Bogø, Stubbekøbing and down to Ulslev, where you turn into **Nykøbing F.** Here the pedestrian streets buzz with the sounds of summer, and the convent garden is worth a visit. You can climb the town's yellow water tower and look out over the flat countryside.

Generalens Lysthus (the General's Summerhouse) at Corselitze

Continue via **Hasselø** and head south to Marrebæk and Gedser between humming wind turbines.

Gedesby is a pleasant place with its old buildings and small church, which has a memorial marking the water level during the flood of 1872. **Gedser** has a ferry link to Rostock in Germany, a geological museum, an ecological museum and a lighthouse.

If you really want to be able to say that you have been to the southernmost point of Scandinavia, you will have to ride a few more kilometres to Gedser Odde, where a stone marks the spot.

Kasse:

Copenhagen – Berlin Route

One of the 12 European cycle routes runs from the North Cape to Malta (Middle Europe Route – approx. 6,000 km), passing through Copenhagen and Berlin. It follows a short section of Route 6 through Amager to begin with and then Route 9 all the way to Gedser. The Danish section is 225 km long. In Germany it is about another 380 km through Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and Brandenburg to Berlin. Further information can be obtained from Turisme region syd (+45 5486 1348), in the free map leaflet entitled "Cykelrute København – Berlin, Ferieoplevelser i eget tempo", and on www.bike-berlin-copenhagen.com.

10 Around Bornholm



Bornholm, the island of cliffs and sunshine, is something very special, with its crags in the north and white sandy beaches in the south. In Hasle you can see and taste smoked "Bornholmers" (i.e. herring), and just to the north there is one of the loveliest cycle trails you'll find on what used to be a rescue path, which leads to the idyllic fishing village of Helligpeder. On the east coast the towns of Gudhjem and Svaneke are a joy to behold. Finally, the round churches with their metre-thick walls make a beautiful emblem for the island. The round trip follows the island's many good cycle trails on old rescue paths, disused railways, forest tracks and minor roads. The distances between towns and attractions are also very kind to cyclists. Bornholm is only 40 km long and 30 km across.

From **Rønne** Harbour you peddle through narrow cobbled streets and head north towards the well-known sights of Jons Kapel, Hammershus and Hammerknuden. Before long you are directed through **Blykobbe Plantage** on a path that winds in and out between birches and Scotch pines.

Before you reach Hasle, you can consider making a detour to **Rubinsøen** lake, which lies in the woods to the east of the main road. Coal was mined there during World War II, but now peace and quiet reign.



Steep rescue path north of Hasle.

In **Hasle** you can taste the herring and other smoked products, as the smokehouse has set up tables and benches for lunch. You can also see how the smoking is done.

Just north of Hasle you get to enjoy one of Denmark's loveliest cycle trails. It follows a former rescue path and takes you down to the small fishing village of **Helligpeder**. The locals have put up a millstone inscribed with the words "Ja det er Helligpeder" (Yes this is Helligpeder), in answer to the question always asked by tourists. As it continues to Teglkås Havn, the road is like a dream as it nestles into the coast with rock formations sticking up everywhere.



The small fishing village of Helligpeder

A little further on there is a small surprise for cyclists: you have to lug your bike up 115 metres of steps to **Jons Kapel**. You can take the road instead, but then you will miss Gines Minde with its café. At Jons Kapel you can get even more exercise by descending the 108 steps to the bottom. Just don't take your bike! The beautiful rock formations rise 22 m above the sea. You can clamber up onto the pulpit, from where, legend has it, the monk Jon preached to the heathen Bornholmers (not the herring this time!).

If you spend the night near the northern tip of the island, even as a cyclist you should explore Hammerknuden and Hammershus on foot. The ruined castle of **Hammershus** is best explored at night perhaps, when Leonora walks the Blue Tower again to the screeching of bats and birds. Hammerknuden headland, on the other hand, should be experienced in daylight so that you can see the difference between the camel heads on the small island and the lion heads in contour on a projecting rock behind you.

On your way through **Sandvig** and **Allinge** one of the buildings you pass is the Hotel Romantik, and about a kilometre after the towns you will see an enormous stone egg, known as Æggehønen (the Egg Chicken) on the beach. As you speculate what came first, the chicken or the egg, as you cycle along, you reach Helligdomsklipperne (the Holy Cliffs), where there is a fascinating art gallery. The architects rediscovered the holy spring and daringly diverted it through the building. On the east coast the towns of Gudhjem and Svaneke exude southern charm with their fig trees and steep streets. In **Gudhjem** the road to the harbour is so steep that cycling down it is prohibited. You are allowed to cycle up it, however!

A short way inland you can visit **Østerlars Rundkirke**. This round church is the largest of its type and an impressive defensive structure. If you remain on the coast, you will pass a small natural harbour by the name of Himmerrigsport (Paradise Port), and just after **Bølshavn** you must remember to greet Helligkvinde (The Priestess) and her petrified children, as the collection of monoliths is called – otherwise misfortune will befall you!

In **Svaneke** you can wander round, admiring all the well-preserved houses and reading the quaint street names. Just outside the town you can visit the Brændesgårdshaven amusement park.

Further south the towns lie like pearls on a string as you cycle through **Årsdale**, **Neksø** and **Snogebæk**. This is also where the good beaches start, culminating in the magnificent dunes at **Dueodde**, the fine sand from which was once used in hourglasses.

The cycle route bypasses Åkirkeby to the south and follows the railway path past **Nylars** on final run into Rønne, where the round trip ends as it began.

Bornholm tips

Bornholm is beautiful in May and June when the cherry trees are in blossom, the beech trees are pale green and the fields of yellow rape shine in the sun. July and August are the high season. You will meet lots of cyclists and other tourists then, so you should remember to make reservations at hotels and youth hostels, as well as booking trains and ferries. September has its charm with the heather in bloom and fewer tourists! The sea gleams blue all year round, and a number of museums offer art and history en route.

Green signposts bearing the word "Cykelvej" show cyclists the way round the island on National Cycle Route 10. Note that the signposts are the only ones in Denmark to show both a men's and a women's bike.

12 Limfjord Route



610 km

From the North Sea to the Kattegat – or vice versa if the wind is blowing that way. There is a fresh breeze across the waters of Limfjord, but there should be a chance of a following wind if you go all the way round. The latest addition to the national cycle route network follows the coast of Limfjord past ports and fishing villages, passing through the counties of North Jutland (235 km), Viborg (295 km) and Ringkøbing (80 km). It runs along dunes and cliffs, takes you past large, flat salt meadows and crosses Vejlerne, one of Northern Europe's most important bird sanctuaries.

On the Limfjord Route your pedals will take you back through 7,000 years of Danish history to the Stone Age. Between Aggersund and Hvalpsund at any rate you will pass through the Ertebølle Culture in western Himmerland, sheltered by coastal cliffs from the Stone Age, on top of crunching kitchen middens.

What is more, most of the cycle route follows paths and tracks where there are no cars, which might otherwise make it hard to imagine that you are in the Stone Age! Along the way you can enjoy a wide range of children-friendly attractions, from Stenaldercentret (the Stone Age Centre) at Ertebølle, where you can shoot a bow and arrow, to a completely different world in the aquapark at Rønbjerg Feriecenter (Rønbjerg Holiday Centre).

At **Aggersund** you can see 70-million-year-old chalk sediment in the coastal cliff, and the road to Løgstør follows the 25-metre cliff from the Stone Age.



Along Limfjord in early May

Just south of Løgstør you must stop at **Limfjordsmuseet** (the Limfjord Museum, which is housed in the former canal manager's residence, which, with its solitary location and corbie gables, is like a manor house in miniature. The story behind it is that the government had the 4 km or so of the canal built in 1861 so that shipping could get to the town without risking the treacherous shoals at Løgstør Grunde. The **canal** was opened by and named after King Frederik VII. This enormous project was comparable in scale to the recent construction of the Storebæltsbroen bridge across the Great Belt.

You cross the canal by Denmark's only working swing bridge, and inside the beautiful building you can study fishing and navigation on Limfjord through the exhibits of the very evocative and well-laid-out museum.

You then follow the cycle route up the east bank of the canal, where horses used to tow the boats. As you pedal you can try and imagine how many wheelbarrow loads

are contained in the high mounds between the canal and the sea. Several hundred men worked on the project for five years. At the western end of the canal there are a couple of old canal keepers' cottages – what a quiet and beautiful place to live the spit must be.



At **Lendrup Huse** you leave the water for a little while. A couple of hills take a bit of pedalling up, but you can soon take a break under a palm tree at **Rønbjerg's** tropical pool complex if you are so inclined. You can enjoy a cup of coffee with a view of the pools or throw yourself into one of the many activities on offer at the holiday centre.

The Limfjord Route west of Aalborg

The route continues past humming wind turbines and along a stretch of moor down to **Vitskøl Kloster**, where the silence envelops you again as you sit in the old ruined church and take in the imposing monastery, which Cistercian monks built from 1157 onwards. The present white building with its three well-maintained storeys dates back to the Middle Ages and is now used as a conference centre, vocational training centre and parish church. There is access to the monastery garden, the shop and the café.

The monastery can be seen from far and wide in the flat countryside around Bjørnholm Bugt, which we follow south to Ertebølle. Here there is a **Stenaldercenter** (Stone Age Centre), where you will be given a graphic demonstration of how Stone Age people lived and worked hand to mouth. In the cliff at Ertebølle Hoved you can see the moler deposits typical of the area. They are 55 million years old and contain ash layers, which bear witness to a large number of volcanic eruptions. The moler also contains history in the form of fossils and the impression of fish and plants from back then.

South of **Ertebølle** an archaeological discovery was made in the shape of a vast kitchen midden of oyster shells, etc., which shows that Stone Age people had a good larder in the form of fish, mussels and birds here on the fjord.

At **Hvalpsund** there is more history to immerse yourself in if you visit Herregården Hessel, Denmark's only thatched manor house, which houses an agricultural museum. Trundle past Lovns Landhandel on Cycle Route 29 (Hvalpsundstien) "in the middle of nowhere" for another experience. At this general store you can buy organic produce and have a chat about sheep farming and the like.

If you fancy, you can end your trip along Limfjord in Stone Age style by camping on one of the tent sites and listening to the birdsong while you prepare mussels in white wine on your Primus. Later you can watch the sun sink behind the reeds, as sky and fjord turn pink, then blue, and finally black as night.

This was just a taste of the long, labyrinthine Limfjord Route. See the map book entitled "På cykel rundt om Limfjorden" published by Esterbauer and www.limfjordsruten.dk for more information.