



COOL COPENHAGEN

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BOLD ARCHITECTURE AND CUTTING-EDGE CUISINE
HAS PUT THIS PICTURESQUE DANISH CAPITAL FIRST
AMONG EUROPE'S CAPITALS OF COOL.

01 Following a major refurbishment in 2008, Nimb Hotel in the heart of the Tivoli Gardens re-opened in the shape of a gastronomic palace of unprecedented dimensions.

02 Amagertorv is one of the oldest and most central squares in Copenhagen. The square is dominated by its Stork Fountain and a number of buildings, the oldest of which dates back to 1616.

03 The Rosenborg Castle, built in 1606, houses some of Denmark's greatest cultural treasures and is worth a visit.

Copenhagen has become first among Europe's capitals of cool - with architecture and design innovation, cutting-edge cuisine and edgy nightlife. The big city in a small kingdom made global news in 2010 when chef René Redzepi's Noma was awarded world's top restaurant in the San Pellegrino World's 50 Best list, knocking Spain's el Bulli off the top spot. Noma topped the list again as the world's best restaurant in 2011.

Noma's setting is certainly the embodiment of industrial Nordic cool - a quayside 18th century warehouse overlooking a harbor surrounded by iconic contemporary architecture. The historic Nordatlantens Brygge building in Christianshavn has been carefully restored keeping its original wood floors and bearing pinewood-beams offering a beautiful contrast to the Nordic art on display in the cultural center. Diners wrap themselves in soft bearskins, relax with a careful selection of furniture by architect Signe Bindslev Henriksen and enjoy inventive cuisine - using only ingredients native to Scandinavia.

Redzepi invites me on a kitchen tour; "Copenhagen (cuisine) today is very vibrant", he says. "It's at an infant stage (in the global culinary arena). Of course gastronomy has been here for a while but we're trying to explore our own history, our own culture and our soil". Redzepi has been widely credited with reinventing Nordic cuisine. His culinary philosophy is sourcing local and sustainable produce whose characteristics are particularly excellent from the Nordic terroir. He works closely with many individual suppliers, many of who forage produce exclusively for Noma. "It's the ingredients that guide us, the dialogue we have with people in the wilderness or farmers. Those are the ones who tell us what's in season", he says. "Sea urchins just came



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into season; I've been waiting for this". He tells me recent accolades are "a great tool to fill up the restaurant", but "the end goal has to be the whole idea of shaping a cuisine and pushing this momentum forward". Redzepi's cookbook, *Noma; Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine* (Phaidon), which begins with a foreword by Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, is worth purchasing. People fly to Copenhagen just to eat at Noma; the two-Michelin star restaurant only accepts bookings 90 days in advance.

This is the appeal of Copenhagen; the city is at the top of the world's most livable cities lists with good reason. From arrival on Gulf Air, on its premium business class service, Falcon Gold, and hallmark Arabian hospitality, at the near-perfect airport at Kastrup, it even has hardwood floors; to departure you will experience the finest in contemporary architecture, and cuisine - Danish style.

When it comes to hotels, Nimb is one of the city's most luxurious locations. The Nimb building with its Moorish-style front dates back to 1909. The Nimb hotel, after major refurbishment, opened in May 2008. With just 14 rooms, 9 of which are suites, this is new Scandinavian luxury. All of the rooms are individually decorated with antique furniture but with Bang & Olufsen technology, the option to borrow an iPad and free wireless Internet. The hotel is also rich in dining options;

we ate at the fine Nimb Terrasse, a French-inspired bistro overlooking Tivoli Gardens, the marvelous old-world amusement park built under Christian VIII. And then there's the chic setting of Hotel Twentyseven, where we stayed, next to an underground ice bar.

Copenhagen is very compact and flat; you can walk or - like most Danes - cycle everywhere. It's possible to cover a lot of ground in 24 hours. Nearly everyone you encounter is attractive, graceful - and stylish. On a walking tour through the city along Hans Christian Andersen Boulevard on charming cobblestone streets one can imagine Kierkegaard having walked the exact same steps. Illums Bolighus is a beautiful store for contemporary Danish items including furniture by the great master Arne Jacobsen. It is located alongside Royal Copenhagen, one of Denmark's top brands, on the main street of Amagertov. The Rosenborg Castle, located in the center of Copenhagen, houses some of Denmark's greatest cultural treasures and is worth a visit. A canal tour is also one of the best ways to see the shape of Copenhagen's skyline and, by exploring Nyhavn along the waterfront, see how two Danish architects are defining the meaning of Cool Copenhagen: Henning Larsen's bold Copenhagen Opera House and Schmidt Hammer Lassen's startling Royal Library extension known as the 'Black Diamond'.



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04 The preferred method of transport in Copenhagen is cycling.

05 A canal tour is one of the best ways to see Copenhagen's skyline and all the brightly colored buildings along the waterfront.

06 The Copenhagen Opera House is the national opera house of Denmark. It is located on the island of Holmen and was designed by architect Henning Larsen.



07 Halloween at Tivoli Gardens. Tivoli Gardens is a famous amusement park which opened on 15 August 1843 and is the second oldest amusement park in the world.

08 Ordrupgaard art museum houses one of Northern Europe's most considerable collections of Danish and French art from the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

09 René Redzepi's Noma was awarded world's top restaurant in the San Pellegrino World's 50 Best list.



Worth spending time in is The National Museum; originally built in 1744 and Denmark's largest museum of cultural history, and the Danish Design Centre; I visited the exhibition 'Denmark by Design' - which runs until 11 May 2013 - showcasing the development of Danish design from 1945 until 2010. Another museum worth visiting is David Samling - The David Collection, a collection of Islamic Art from the 8th to the 19th century; housed in the building once occupied by the museum's founder. Zaha Hadid's Ordrupgaard Museum in Ordrup is also worth the trip.

There is a vibrant restaurant scene in Copenhagen spawned by Noma. A former protégé of Redzepi, Anders Selmer, has created Kødbyens Fiskebaren, offering the city's finest fresh fish, in Vesterbro. The ultra-cool restaurant brings the spirit of Noma's light, fresh and flavorsome Nordic cuisine to a more casual setting. Christian Puglisi, former sous chef at Noma, opened up his own restaurant Relae in August 2010. The modest-looking basement restaurant in residential area Nørrebro is getting rave reviews not least by Danish foodies and the national media, but even internationally. Redzepi's new Nordic cuisine is reaching a wider audience and for this he has our gratitude.

As a self-confessed caffeine addict, I was quick to find the best espresso in town: Café

Europa, on one of Copenhagen's most centrally located squares. Lagkagehuset patisseries and bakeries offer delicious bread at some of the best addresses all over Copenhagen.

Schønnemann, in a quiet square, just off the main shopping area in Copenhagen, offers "Classic Danish Lunch since 1877" and is where the locals eat. Schønnemann arguably serves the best Smørrebrød in town. The freshly prepared open-faced sandwich is a local institution. Another option is the smoked halibut with warm cucumber a la crème, radishes and chives on caraway bread.

Wondercool is Copenhagen's new winter festival. Each February it celebrates the fact that the Danish capital remains bursting with life and cultural energy, despite the cold winter months.

Right now Copenhagen is arguably the coolest city in Europe. Cool becomes the Danes. I only wish I'd had time to hit Geranium - home of the GOLD Bocuse d'Or 2011 - and Karriere. But I'm already planning my return to Copenhagen. Copenhagen is one of those inspirational places that work its way into your heart. As René Redzepi says: "There is this energy here that is quite special for our region and unique as well". It's the combination of the expected - like clean-lined design and the unexpected - like sea urchin and grilled cucumber; dill and cream - that has made Copenhagen one of Gulf Air's newest destinations.