

# Denmark Cultural Etiquette



## Meeting and Greeting

- Shake hands with everyone present--men, women and children--at a business or social meeting. Shake hands with women first, and shake hands again when leaving.

## Body Language

- Danes do not like to be touched.

## Corporate Culture

- Danes take punctuality for business meetings very seriously and expect that you will do likewise; call with an explanation if you are delayed. Meetings begin and end punctually.
- Danes generally engage in 15 minutes of small talk before getting down to business.
- Agendas are clearly set for meetings with a stated purpose to brief, discuss or decide an issue.
- Decisions are made after consulting with everyone involved in a project, but accountability lies with the individual.
- Danes are infamous for informality.

## Dining and Entertainment

- Danes insist on punctuality for social occasions.
- Dinner is generally long and slow (can be as long as 4-5 hours) with much conversation. Plan to stay at least one hour after a meal ends.
- At a formal dinner, name cards may be presented to each man with the name of his female dinner partner, who will be seated to his right. He should escort her to the dinner table.
- Toasting can be a very formal process. Never toast your hosts until they have toasted you, and never toast anyone senior to you in rank or age.
- The guest of honor or the oldest male makes a short speech of "thank you" to the hostess.
- Guests are expected to eat everything on their plate.
- Spouses are not commonly invited to a business dinner.

## Dress

- Never dress sloppily.
- Black-tie events are common for the business community.
- Jeans (clean and neat) are acceptable for casual wear.

## Gifts

- Gifts are opened immediately upon receipt.
- When invited to someone's home, always bring a small gift for the hostess. Gifts should not be lavish. Give: bouquets of flowers (wrapped), liquor (very expensive in Denmark). Do not give: sharp objects.
- Gifts are normally not exchanged at business meetings, but small gifts may be appropriate at the successful conclusion of negotiations. Give: liquor, wine, chocolates, whiskey, gifts with company logos.

## Helpful Hints

- Danes may have an ironical way of expressing themselves. They may say, "It's wonderful weather," when it is pouring rain, or "It is a trifle chilly," when it is stifling hot.
- Danes say "thank you" for everything--anytime, anywhere.
- Danes do not use the expression, "How are you?", as loosely as Americans. Do not ask this question unless you have developed a personal relationship with someone and truly wish to know.
- Use proper etiquette with Danes. Relaxed, polite manners are appreciated.
- Refrain from abundantly complimenting or commenting on anyone's clothing.
- Never call a Dane a Swede or Norwegian.

## Especially for Women

- It is acceptable for a foreign woman to invite a Danish man to dinner, but his wife may come along. A traditional Danish man may insist on paying, but the younger generation has no problem with women paying.
- It is better for a woman to schedule business lunches with men rather than dinners.
- Women do not smoke in the streets in Denmark. However, they do smoke elsewhere.

Resource: [http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural\\_etiquette/ce\\_dk.htm](http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_dk.htm)