

# Vacation Guide

## Some unusual holidays with horses in Denmark

By John Alexander

RIDING facilities in Denmark are richly distributed throughout the country with the holiday horse happily harnessed to the outdoor pursuits that the country so perfectly provides. For the family, a farmhouse fortnight, plus the use of a pony, is always possible. And for the camper, too, riding is generally available close by, or as in one case I

pruned and the detritus of Denmark sampled at a sensible level.

Do not be fooled by the feeling that Denmark is flat and perhaps a little featureless. There is considerable contrast, certainly in Jutland, and with virtually traffic-free roads in June, I found I could drive quickly from one type of landscape to another. Much of it,

with reductions for children, you can stay anywhere during the peak season. And with healthy-sized meals, and virtually the run of the places, this is good value—especially so in high cost Scandinavia. A good selection of farmhouse holidays is available, so choose well and you can tie in your riding quite simply. I headed for Krogsminde, a farm at Hover, near Vejle, Jutland. Within an hour I was happily part of the Christensen household and sharing a schnapps at a belly meal. I was also quickly introduced to one of their horses, and next day joined a group of young Danes for a pleasant hour's hacking in the surrounding woods. While there is no charge for using the farm horses, Mrs. Inger Christensen stressed that guests should at least be able to handle them, as well as being capable of catching, saddling and grooming them.

If you want something more formal, I suggest the Stutteri Egriitt at Landehalle which, while basically a breeding stable for Hannoverian and Swedish Warm Bloods, also has twenty horses and ponies for riding. The cost of an hour's hack is around \$3.75. Started in 1964 by a young couple, Egon and Britta, with only two mares the stud has developed quickly, and is now concerned not simply with breeding but also has some sixty horses at livery. The livery cost is \$30 a week, though owners are expected to muck out their horses, clean tack and generally play a major role. This is pretty standard practice—though you can pay extra for the services we tend to take for granted. With an indoor riding school 16 metres by 40 and some superb riding country nearby, I would recommend a visit but do let the school know you are coming first.

If you like a club atmosphere, and the Danes are charming riding companions, I would try the one at Horsens. It is centred on a farm, has a

20 x 60 metre indoor school, a large outdoor manege and a comfortable club-house with a bar and refreshments available. A member of the Danish Riding Association, the club offers not only virtually road-free hacking in nearby woods at about \$6 an hour, but lessons by an English trained instructor. Cross-country work, plus hunter trials and drag hobs are also on the calendar. But of the thirty-five horses, only eight are school owned so, again, book in advance. Horsens is worth a visit in its own right, being a market town since 1442 and Sondergade is not only the most important street but is acknowledged as being the biggest and most impressive of any Danish provincial thoroughfare. Mying with it as a tourist town is Vejle, which received its charter in 1327. It is close to Krogsminde farm and has its own riding school. Forty horses are available for hacking at around \$7 an hour, though the surroundings are more suburban than at Horsens. Silkeborg not only sounds sumptuous, but is spreading up round a paper mill in the 19th century. It retains a confident charm, helped by being set in wooded scenery on the Sky

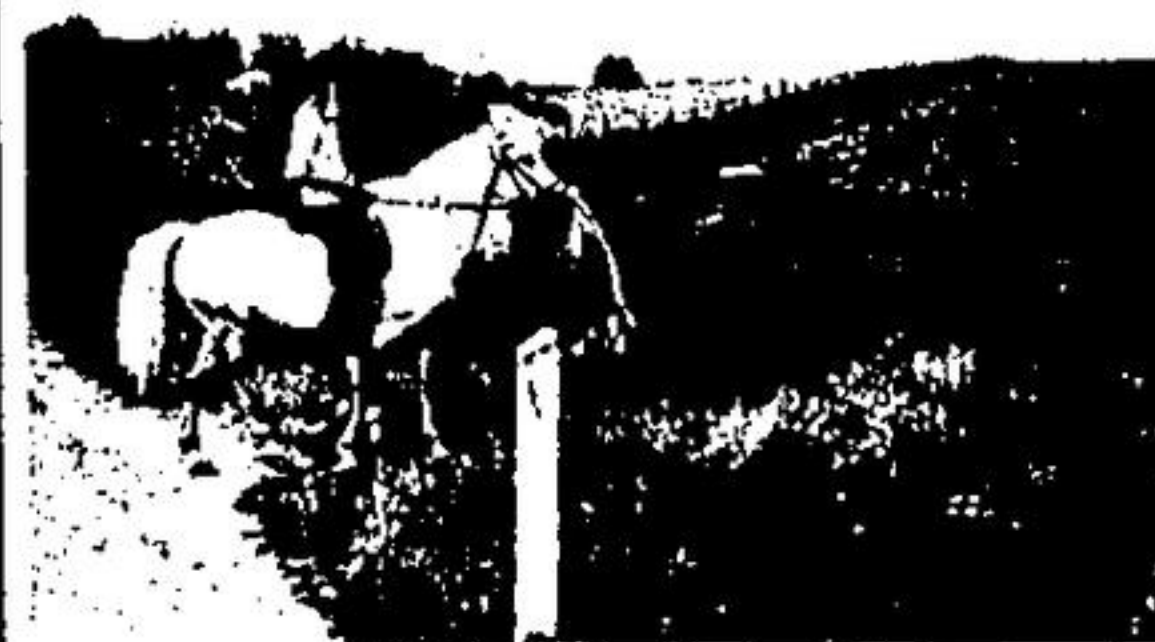
Mountain Lakes. Just how opulent a centre it was—and still is—can be seen in the town museum, which also houses 'The Tollund Man' or rather his head which lies beautifully preserved in a glass case. The poor chap was actually strangled by a piece of leather around 2,000 years ago and his body was discovered back in 1950. It is only a few miles from this fascinating centre—a Virklund—that a new riding school opened in June 1977. Set in its own land, and hence almost self-sufficient for feedstuffs and riding country, it stables sixty horses, of which forty-five are at livery at \$150 a month. A Danish Riding Association member, it not only has a 20 x 60 metre indoor school but such association requirements as a well laid tack room and a clean and airy cafeteria for the riders. Riding is around \$4 per hour with instruction available

in dressage or jumping if requested. Axel Levin Larsen, who runs the school, has high hopes for the future, especially as the indoor school can hold 600 people for events, or even 1,000 at a pinch. Like many Danes, he speaks English perfectly and he hopes to add an English instructor to his staff. The school can accommodate sixteen people, ten in one room, six in another—and a week's stay costs around \$175.00. This covers meals, accommodation, and three hours riding each day.



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A farm holiday in Denmark provides an excellent opportunity for experiencing the beauty of the country. Jutland is virtually traffic-free in June and an ideal location for horse-riding and the outdoor life.

came across, actually on the camp-site itself. If you want to go the complete route, riding holidays are available at inclusive rates, based either on instruction or hacking, or a combination of both.

Denmark is by no means the least expensive of holiday countries. But riding, ironically, is not that expensive—and, if combined with one of the excellent inclusive offers now available, prices can be

admittedly, was rural, with rolling pastures, full of ripening corn, giving way to woods and gentle hills. But then surely that is what we expect of Denmark and why its farm-house holidays, in particular, have proved so popular. They are also run with professional polish, and have an official bureau which agrees on standards and prices. Now, for around \$19 a day for full-board or \$16.50 half-board,

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04 July	31 August	8 weeks	04 June	\$369
18 July	27 July	1 week	18 June	\$369
18 July	10 August	3 weeks	18 June	\$369
18 July	24 August	5 weeks	18 June	\$369
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