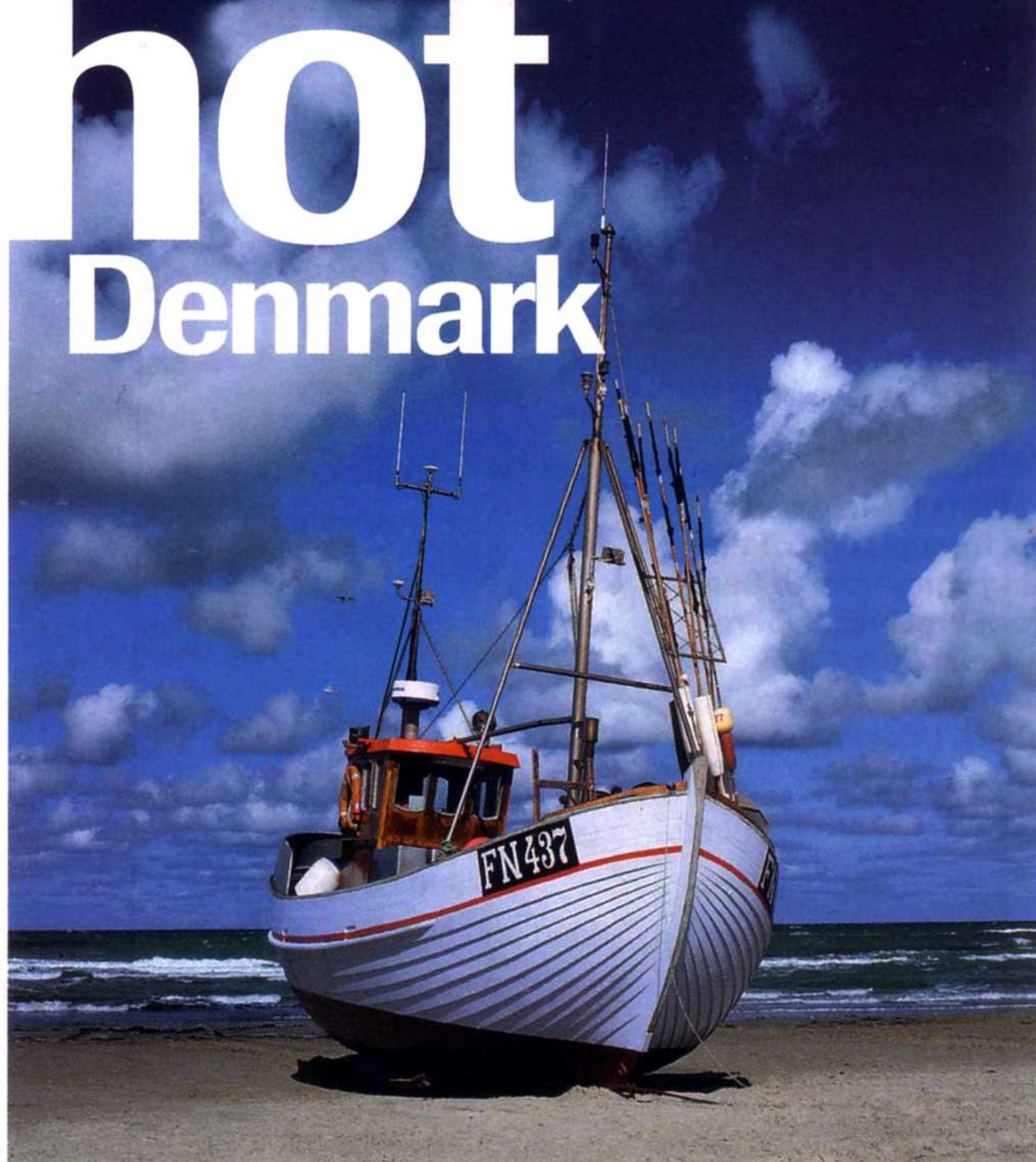


# hot Denmark



Left: A fishing boat moored on the beach at Løkken in north-east Denmark. Below: The grassy sand dunes of this popular Danish coastal village.



## SCANDINAVIAN SURPRISE

Undulating dunes flatten into soft, white sand beaches. On one side of the wide cove I can see fishing boats bobbing among the inky blue waves. At the other end sunbathers are soaking up the rays.

When planning your summer holiday Denmark doesn't usually spring to mind. But perhaps it should, because you're never further than 32 miles from the unspoilt white sandy coastline. Last year, 205 Danish beaches were awarded Blue Flags, which are given for exemplary cleanliness, water quality and safety.

Denmark sits lower than its Scandinavian neighbours, so summer temperatures can reach a pleasant 25°C. From London I catch a 90-minute flight to Denmark's fourth largest city, Aalborg, in the northern county of Jutland.

I'm perfectly positioned to explore the northern coastline, known as the Land of Light because of the long summer days and abundance of sunlight.

Driving is the easiest way to get around, but there is an extensive and efficient public transport network. It's a pleasant 90-minute train ride north-east to Skagen, the northernmost point of Denmark. This charming fishing port sits on a thin peninsula surrounded by the Skagerrak Strait and Kattegat Bay. Its unspoilt beauty and romantic sea views have made it a popular spot for artists and writers for more than a century. I follow the sound of the seagulls through winding streets and past clusters of mustard yellow cottages until I reach the harbour, where the wharfs are crammed with yachts and brightly coloured trawlers.

The brisk sea breeze stirs up my appetite so I stop at one of the nearby seafood restaurants for a traditional Danish meal of breaded plaice stuffed with shrimps and asparagus.

Afterwards I head to Grenen, a shifting sand spit located at the tip of Skagen. For about £2 you can take a tour to literally walk off the end of Denmark and into the sea. Looking closely I can see the watery seam where the two waterways clash against

each other. The resulting rip tides make this spot of coastline a no-go for swimming, but it's the perfect place to see the sunset.

The following day I head over to the north-east coast. It's a one-hour bus ride from Aalborg to the laid-back coastal village of Løkken. I walk towards the grassy sand dunes until the seafront opens out in front of me. With sweeping beaches as far as the eye can see, this is one of Denmark's most popular summer spots. As I walk along the water's edge my feet sink into the soft white sand. Swimmers bob in the deep blue water while children play in the foaming surf.

Dozens of white bathing cabins snake along the sand. There's a wide selection of restaurants and bars just minutes from the beach, making Løkken a family favourite during the day, and a bustling nightspot as soon as the sun goes down. ■

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