

Sainsbury's COOK, TRAVEL AND LIVE WELL magazine

SEPTEMBER 2026

35+

SEASONAL
RECIPES

ONLY
£3.95

- CHICKEN AND FIG BAKED RICE
- BEETROOT CURRY
- SQUASH MINISTRONE

RAYMOND BLANC

French bistro
cooking at home

PLUS!

Win £250
to spend at
Brasserie Blanc

DON'T GET HACKED

HOW TO PROTECT
YOURSELF AGAINST
ONLINE SCAMS



Get set *for* autumn

Cheese and onion tart ● Blackberry and apple crumble
Coffee and walnut muffins ● Brown butter crumpets



ON SALE 26 AUG OFF SALE 29 SEPT

TASTING THE GOOD LIFE

SHORT-HAUL
DESTINATIONS

TO BOOK NOW

Solo travel can be daunting, but not in Copenhagen, says **Rebecca Denne**. She pulls up a seat for the city's latest culinary and cultural trend: communal dining

You'll love it – you'll want to move there!' This is a friend's response when I say I'm visiting Copenhagen. It's a city that's always appealed to me, not just for the copious bakeries but also for the effortlessly chic locals and proximity to London (just two hours from Gatwick).

Pastries aside (for the moment), it's the Danish capital's communal experiences I'm here to explore. But before I break bread with strangers, I check into my hotel, just 20 or so minutes from the airport. Coco Hotel is a boutique spot in the hip area of Vesterbro. Its cream-coloured walls come to life with splashes of red, white and blue in the corridors and pops of artwork in every room.

On night one, I head to dinner in my neighbourhood (it doesn't take long for me to feel at home). Folkehuset Absalon is a community space with a huge heart; the converted church hosts almost 100 events a week, from yoga to ceramics. Tonight, about 180 of us gather around long tables

to have dinner and listen to jazz, courtesy of Fini Broadbery and Pelle von Bülow. We tuck into homemade bread, roast potatoes with parmigiana and burst cherry tomatoes, a crispy salad with toasted pine nuts, and a wild garlic and pesto dip. It's food made with love. As the music starts, I look around – and I see contentment. No-one reaching for their phone, no unnecessary chatter, just people in the moment.

Later, I ask fellow diner Emma-Catrine (who's there with her brother and sister) what 'hygge' really means for the Danes. 'Comfort' and 'togetherness' are two of the words she uses in reply. Well, I'm feeling an enormous sense of hygge and I've barely unpacked. I leave with an earworm from our musicians: 'It's the good life. To be free and explore the unknown...'

STREETS AHEAD

On day two, after a syrupy cardamom bun and coffee for breakfast, I take a canal tour with GoBoat before visiting Reffen, the



largest street food market in the Nordic countries. It has a buzz that I haven't experienced before, with 'zones' of eclectic music, street art to raise a smile and more than 30 vendors serving food from around the world. On a hygge high from last night, I choose meatballs from a stall called (you guessed it) Hygge.

Other than the odd bus or metro, I explore on foot, and walking brings me to my second dinner – as part of Silvers, at the home of Karin and Bo. Silvers is an initiative that aims to foster connection through older members of the community hosting dinners. With four other guests, we explore identity, behaviour and how they impact us. Our hosts explain that they love conversing with open minds and open hearts – and I absolutely agree. As we feast on homemade pea fritters, nutty salad and butter-slathered fresh bread, we have conversations that I've never had with close friends or family. I leave feeling full of warmth and with a genuine appreciation for meeting new people.

COMFORT AND JOY

The next day, my cardamom bun fuels me for Morning Dance, back at Absalon: an hour-long session of freestyle dance, led by Sita. About 20 of us move to the music collectively, then sit together at the end to share anything we'd like to. It's the combination of individual energy merged with the group's energy that strikes a chord. Travelling alone can feel both



invigorating and daunting, but I'd recommend this experience to any solo explorer.

Lunch requires a 10-minute walk to Aamanns Genbo, famed for its traditional *smørrebrød* (open sandwiches). Manager Henry tells me that it's normal for people to have two. Phew. This is comfort food with balance and elegance at the heart.

More comfort food awaits at tonight's dinner venue – Nordhus, a community hub in the area of Nordhavn. It's run by a group of 18-25-year-old culture creators, many of whom live on site. I sit with a gang of students who tell me they're celebrating their exams. We dunk hunks of bread (I'm seeing a running theme here) in a red curry with blue mussels, and twirl noodles as we chat and laugh. There's that warm and fuzzy feeling again.

Before I head home, I join a 'Deep Session' at Plugin Heat Club. Facilitated by Jeanette, I sweat it out in a barrel sauna with a dozen other folk. It's a ritual that locals, tourists and even groups of colleagues partake in.

After a refreshing shower, my final stop is BaneGaarden, where I meet co-founder Ida Marie. Unsure what to expect, I'm amazed as I step into a little oasis on the outskirts of the city. Organic bakery Perron serves up golden pastries and focaccia sandwiches, while the various communal spots and barns are used for a mix of events, parties and even corporate workshops. The vision? To create a space for everyone. 'Hygge means bringing together a mix of people – it's where the magic happens,' says Ida Marie. If this is hygge, then I like it. ■

'At the community hub Nordhus, we dunk hunks of bread in a red curry with blue mussels as we chat and laugh'

Clockwise from above left: Copenhagen old town; communal diners at Absalon; Coco Hotel's courtyard; *smørrebrød* at Aamanns Genbo



THE DETAILS

B&B at Coco Hotel starts at £163 – visit coco-hotel.com. Book for Silvers at thesilvers.dk; for Absalon events, visit absaloncph.dk; for Nordhus, visit nordhus.dk. For more information, visit visitdenmark.com and visitcopenhagen.com.