

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

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the  
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# LIGHT IN AUGUST

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WITH DAYTIME LASTING WELL PAST 10, AND EVERYTHING FROM  
THE BEACH TO THE FARM STAND AT MOST A BIKE RIDE  
AWAY, DENMARK'S LAID-BACK SEASIDE TOWNS ARE PASTEL-PAINTED  
BACKDROPS FOR GENERATIONS OF SUMMERING FAMILIES

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*photographs by Ditte Isager*





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“I  
BELIEVE IN  
CONTINUITY,”

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Camilla Vest says. A model and design entrepreneur (her company, Objects by Camilla Vest, curates Nordic furniture for shops like The Line and Trnk), she moved from her native Denmark to New York's TriBeCa more than 20 years ago, but has spent every summer since childhood in Tisvilde, a relaxed seaside village an hour northwest of Copenhagen. Her Danish husband, Peder, and their kids, Anna, 14, and August, 8, now embrace the tradition, which also includes grandparents, siblings, and a bevy of cousins. “We love bringing them back to soak up the cultural vibe,” Vest says. “And they love being able to bike everywhere and meeting the same kids on the beach each year.”

The Danish coastline is dotted with small beach towns whose century-old “bathing hotels” and pale summer nights have long lured Copenhagen's affluent families to buy second homes. Tisvilde, on Zealand's north coast, stands out as a lodestar for the city's creative set, ever since two of those historic hotels, the Helenekilde Badehotel and Tisvilde Strandhotel, were tastefully renovated a decade ago by the former Royal Danish Ballet principal Alexander Kølpin. Vintage dealers from Copenhagen drive up on Saturdays to comb the flea market for Louis Poulsen lamps or Royal Copenhagen dishes. And the area's farm-to-table-since-forever traditions have been elevated by newcomers like chef Thomas Elletoft Køster, whose Rabarbergaarden (rhubarb farm) occupies an old farmhouse that turns out handmade pork rillettes with pickled prawns and, of course, rhubarb pudding.

But the beach is summer's main focus. Before the kids wake up, “Peder and I will put on our bathrobes and walk down our 90 steps to the beach for a swim. I don't wear a suit, and no one cares!” Vest says. Then someone will make a run to the bakery for Danish seeded rye *rugbrød* and *kanelsnegle*, or cinnamon rolls, which get packed for the beach with boiled eggs and a coffee pot. “Bringing your coffee pot to the beach is Danish *hygge*,” she says.

Family and friends come and go all day—swimming, fishing for crabs, playing cards. Afternoons are for biking to Hansens Flødeis in Tisvilde for an *isvaffel*—handmade ice cream topped with *flødeboller* (chocolate-covered mallow), whipped cream, and jam. Or visiting the *grøntsager* farm, where Thomas Olloz has grown veggies “that taste like candy” for the likes of Noma.

Much of this bounty winds up on the grill, alongside freshly caught langoustines or local spiced lamb sausage. Sunlight can linger until nearly 11, at which point Vest might hang a sheet between two yard poles for a movie under the stars. But the day isn't quite over. “We love to go for a nighttime swim,” Vest says. “We Danes have to make up for our long, dark winters.” ♦



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Previous spread, from left: Grilled langoustines on the deck; the road to Orby. Clockwise from top: Helenekilde Badehotel; Camilla Vest (center, in pink sweater) with her husband, Peder (to her left), their daughter, Anna (striped shirt), and family; Peder's scallop ceviche.







## HOW TO SUMMER LIKE A DANE

"Tisvilde is a very welcoming place," Vest says. "On the beach, it's hard not to fall into conversation with locals who want to give you all their tips."

### Getting to Tisvilde

Zealand's northern beach towns are a perfect tack-on to a few days in Copenhagen. Rent a car and drive up the coast, stopping around mile 22 in Humlebæk to visit the [Louisiana Museum of Modern Art](#), which faces Sweden. Exhibits rotate, but Vest loves their sculpture garden, "and there's a play studio for kids," she says. Nearby is Karen Blixen's house museum, [Rungstedlund](#), with furniture and paintings the author brought from Africa. Following the coast, you'll hit Tisvilde near mile 55.

### Home for the week

The most charming hotels are the two remodeled by the former ballet dancer Alexander Kølpin. The seaside Helenekilde Badehotel is full of bamboo and Danish designs in beachy hues, with a terrace. The [Tisvilde Strandhotel](#) is a linen-swathed village town house.

If you're thinking of staying a few days, Vest suggests renting a house in Tisvilde, or neighboring Vejby or Rågeleje. Search [sommerferie.nu](#).

### Your meal plan

Breakfast is all about fresh baked goods. [Brød & Vin](#), on Tisvilde's main street, sells flavorful organic rye bread and *tebirkes*, Danish poppy-seed rolls. "If you get there early, you see locals on bikes in their bathrobes getting bread for breakfast," Vest says. Some days, she'll bike 15 minutes through rolling pasture to [Rabarbergaarden](#), run by the farmer-chef Thomas Elletoft Køster and his wife in a rustic farmhouse, for cinnamon rolls and Danish rye made with an old wheat varietal called Øland.

It's also great for lunch or dinner. "Everything's homegrown and organic," Vest says. Back in town, there's the [Little Cafe](#), a cozy vegetarian spot known for its fresh-flower salad, and the [Tisvilde Bio Bistro](#), a brasserie that serves classic Danish dishes and draws a crowd with local musical acts. Helenekilde Badehotel is the town's fine-dining spot, where *rødspætte*, a traditional summer dish of fried flounder with potatoes and parsley, is a favorite.

If you're renting a house, pick up rainbow-colored veggies from Thomas Olloz at [Grønt fra Kolsbæk](#) near Helsingør. "Just take what you want and leave your money in the box," Vest says. The fish market, [Den Friske Fisk](#), on [Holløselund Strandvej](#), is open on weekdays for langoustines and flounder that you can grill or fry and serve with their remoulade sauce. Buy your steak and spiced sausages at [Kødsnedkeren](#), or "meat carpenter," 10 minutes outside of Tisvilde in Ørby.

### Stay busy off the beach

Saturday's flea market, the [Tisvilde Loppemarked](#), on the town's athletic field, is a huge draw. Go as early as 7 A.M. to nab finds like a vintage Arne Jacobsen lamp or cutting boards handmade in Italy by Andrea Brugi.

While biking is the best way to get around—hotels have loaners, or rent across from the market—Tisvilde is great for strolling and shopping: [Aiayu](#) has a smart selection of organic bed linens and casual Danish clothing; [No17 Limited](#) is a Nordic concept store. Refuel with an *isvaffel* (ice cream with toppings) at [Hansens Flødeis](#), or a coffee at [Riccos kaffebar](#).

And on a rainy day, a visit to the [Rudolph Tegner Museum](#) in Dronningmølle is a must, where the figurative work of early-20th-century Symbolist sculptor Rudolph Tegner fills a modernist cement bunker.



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Opposite: Camilla with her son, August, and a friend's son. Above, from top: Aiayu, on Tisvilde's main street; the beach view from the Vests' house.

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