

VisitEsbjerg 

ESBJERG

Two town walks in Esbjerg



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The equestrian statue of Christian IX



Town walk in Esbjerg

This leaflet presents two different town walks.

The routes have been drawn up by VisitEsbjerg and take you on a historic tour through the central part of Esbjerg.

Both routes of approx. 1.5 km each are shown on the map on the back of this folder.

Have a nice time in Esbjerg!

Both walks start and end in Torvet (Market Square)

The walk starts and ends in Market Square, which today is the heart of Esbjerg.

However, as a young town that was meant to be a harbour, the square lay on the outskirts. There was not a single house on the square when it was first built. Wilkens, chartered surveyor, who, in 1870, made the first town plan of Esbjerg, simply located the Market Square at the intersection between two of the town's main hubs – the Harbour and the Railway Station. Note the different architectural styles of the buildings, e.g. C.H. Clausen's bank building at No. 18, which dates from 1896. It was a somewhat unusual bank building at the time it was built – an imitation of North Italian tiled Gothic. The town numbered 400 souls, most of whom lived in the two streets, Havnegade and Smedegade. In 1875, apart from two two-storey houses, there were only single-storey houses in Esbjerg.



The Old Courthouse and County Gaol



Esbjerg Water Tower

The chessboard town

1 The Old Courthouse and County Gaol

Esbjerg's former Courthouse and County Gaol was built in 1891 by the architect H.C. Amberg and officially opened in August 1892. Today, it houses the Esbjergs visitors centre. On the first floor, there is a wedding room and the former town council chamber can be used for receptions etc. The building originally consisted of two sections: a courthouse and town hall in the front part, and a police and a county gaol in the rear section. The cells were used until 1956 when the new police station became operational. The Courthouse was used until 1970. During the Second World War,



the Germans controlled the building, and many people in the Resistance have frequented its cells.

Market Square
The equestrian statue

2 Statue of Christian IX

From his high horse, the founder of Esbjerg, King Christian IX, gazes out across the square towards the harbour. After having lost the war against Germany in 1864, the Danish Parliament passed a bill in 1868 on the establishment of Esbjerg Harbour which Christian IX duly signed. The statue was raised in 1899 by the citizens of Esbjerg in connection with the town gaining its municipal borough status. It was not unveiled, however, until the following year because of a strike, so the plinth stood empty for a whole year. The inscription reads: 'In Honour of the Founder of the Town, the Citizens of Esbjerg raised this Monument'. There is also the Danish national coat of arms in bronze with the king's motto 'With God for Honour and Justice'.

Christian IX was also called the father-in-law of Europe, as he succeeded in getting several of his children married into European royal and princely houses. Two of his daughters became Tsarina of Russia and Queen of England respectively, and one of his sons was elected king of Greece.



Railway station

3 Queen Louise

The beautifully restored structure at Torvet 19 was built as a hotel and hostelry in 1890, with a restaurant facing the Square and, for the initiated, a speakeasy in the back yard – popularly known as The Bloody Arsehole. Since then, the house has had a chequered career with both offices and shops, although it has mostly served as a pub and, later on, a discotheque. In 1994, comprehensive restoration restored the facade to its original appearance, the building gaining an award from Esbjerg Town Foundation. Today, it is a modern restaurant and a charming bar with a traditional pub atmosphere.

4 Kongensgade - to the left

Kongensgade is the longest pedestrian street of Denmark. We suggest that you lean your head well back to get a total impression of the beautiful edifices.

5 Østergade

Østergade also bears the mark of Architect C.H. Clausen's work: No. 4 – Florentine Renaissance-style – built in 1899 and in the two buildings comprising Østre Skole (School), a Neo-Gothic building from 1896 and a Neo-Baroque example from 1918.

6 The Railway Station

The main railway station building is one of Esbjerg's most important architectural monuments. It was erected during 1902-04, in accordance with plans drawn by Professor H. Wenck (who also drew the plan for the Main Railway Station of Copenhagen). In 2002, the building gained an award from Esbjerg Town Foundation.

7 Norgesgade

There are numerous attractive residences in Norgesgade, for example Nos 21, 24 and 31 – all typical examples from the period around 1910 when the architectural style changed from "skønvirke" (Art Nouveau) to Neo-Baroque.

A beautiful example is the Temperance Lodge for the I.O.G.T. order at No. 23 which dates from 1912. In 1914, there were 21 temperance societies in Esbjerg with a total membership of approximately 2,500.

8 Torvegade

Esbjerg's first town plan from 1870 was extended on a number of occasions. The first buildings in the town's history were small unpretentious houses built in the local architectural style, both as private and business premises. The street corners are marked by tower structures, a natural way to emphasize any of the many right-angled corners to be found in a gridplan town.

9 Torvegade 37-39

The building from 1912 was designed by C.H. Clausen. The strongly featuring bays would seem to indicate that the architect has found his models in German architectural trade journals.

10 Torvegade 45

The building is the former library, built in 1926 and designed by the architects C.H. Clausen and Harald Peters. With its characteristic mansard roof, the building now houses Esbjerg Museum, which, among other things, features an Esbjerg exhibition on interiors and flats from the 1890s to the 1930s.



Esbjerg Museum

11 Torvegade 47

Today, the building houses the Local City Archives, but it was originally built in 1904 as the Technical School of Esbjerg and enlarged in 1926. Note the symbol of learning, the owl, in the arch of the entrance portal, as well as the renovated front door. The earliest facade section was designed by the architect C.H. Clausen. Inside, the stairwell has been restored to its former appearance, with an arresting colour scheme.

12 H. C. Ørstedsgade

H.C. Ørstedsgade is a museum street, pure and simple – a highly successful example of the Centre of Esbjerg Project that started in 1993. The first two houses built in the street, in 1889, are Nos 9 and 11. At that time, they were two-family houses with a flat on the ground floor and one on the first floor – and, it should be noted, these were for families with children.

The houses subsequently built were also small, unpretentious workmen's houses. Only No. 13 is slightly larger and architect-designed. It was built in 1909 – and in it lived a family with 12 children. The proximity to the electricity works was something that could be heard and felt. Recorded reminiscences mention that when the turbines were in action, they made the tile stove dance ... and the china fall off the shelves. The houses of the present-day street have been renovated and are well-maintained. The street lighting and paving have been restored to the original style.

13 "The Clock"

The South Denmark Academy of Music's cobbled yard is graced with Thorbjørn Lausten's huge sculpture "The Clock". This work consists of a modern sundial in steel and neon, satellite-controlled and a sandstone block from which water gushes out – the whole process accompanied by soft music beamed out through a set of loudspeakers.

14 The Academy of Music

The new address of the Academy of Music, The Old Electricity Works from 1907, is a fine example of cultural innovation in former industrial premises. Per Wohlerth is the architect behind the conversion of the electricity works, which was originally designed by C.H. Clausen. The former turbine hall has been transformed into a unique concert hall, with a large concert organ with 44 stops. The hall has been decorated by the artist Hans Tyrrestrup.

Skt. Nikolai Kirke

15 In 1965, a new Catholic church, Skt. Nikolai Kirke (St. Nicholas' Church), was built, designed by the architect Johan Otto von Spreckelsen, world-famous for such structures as La Grande Arche in Paris.



The Academy of Music



"The Clock"

- 16 Kirkegade 61, at the corner of Kirkegade**
The small chapel was built as a chapel and a school for the Ansgar Foundation in Esbjerg in 1923.

- 17 Nørregade**
In Nørregade lies the beautiful St. Joseph's Hospital, built in 1903, and originally run by St. Joseph sisters. The nuns have left the city a long time ago, and the hospital has recently been renovated and now houses The Danish Safety Technology Authority. Right next to St. Joseph's Hospital lies the first Catholic church from 1923. The building is now part of the private St. Nicholas' School.



The Church of Our Saviour

- 18 The Cemetery of The Church of Our Saviour**
Esbjerg had a cemetery before it had a church. It was laid out in 1880 for private means. One of the city's cattle exporters laid out the money, on the understanding he would get his money back as burials took place. The cemetery is no longer in use and has been converted into an open area that functions as an oasis in the heart of the city. The gravestones that have been preserved are of well-known figures from the pioneer days of the city.

- 19 The Church of Our Saviour (Vor Frelzers Kirke)**
Vor Frelzers Kirke is the city's first church – before then, the citizens of Esbjerg had to go to Jerne Church. It is a Neo-Romanesque building, typical of its time, built in 1887 and enlarged in 1896. The church has murals by Ole Søndergaard, from 1928, which feature many local inhabitants as models. In 2001, the church was restored, and a new organ with 43 stops was inaugurated.

- 20 Kirkegade 25 – The Bethania Mission House**
The Home Mission was strongly represented in Esbjerg during its first years. The present-day chapel is from 1906, designed by C.H. Clausen, and replaced a previous building. The Home Mission (Evangelic branch of the Church of Denmark) wanted to underscore the importance of the mission house by having it built in a style that was also used when building national churches, basically Gothic, but with an Italian inspiration. It features a rosette window between two spires, best seen from the chapel square.



Heerups Have

- 21 Heerups Have**
At the Market Square lies the garden of Heerups Have with small granite sculptures by the artist Henry Heerup.



Pink route

From Pioneers to Utzon

1 The Old Courthouse and County Gaol

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2 The equestrian statue of Christian IX

See blue route.



The Old Courthouse and County Gaol



The winter ice rink in Town Square

Esbjerg Posthus

2 Torvet 20, Esbjerg Post Office, was designed by the architect Ulrik Plesner in 1907. Superficially, the house would seem to be an example of Danish brick Gothic. The house is strict and well-proportioned, with a free treatment of details: the fillings of the corbie gables, windows and decorations.

Danske Bank

3 At Torvet No. 18 is the C. H. Clausen bank building from 1896 – somewhat untypical of its period. The building has many fine details and decorations. It has a strict symmetry around a balcony on the second floor.

4 Torvegade – Stardust

To make the Performing Arts Centre more visible from the Square – and to link the two locations more closely together – a 'glittering path of stardust' has been laid out in the granite paving from the Square to the Performing Arts Centre.



The avenue of light at night

The motif for the light sculpture 'Stardust' derives from the starry sky above Torvegade on New Year's Eve in 2000. 'Stardust' comprises 288 stars. As Torvegade climbs from the Square towards the Performing Arts Centre, the light is 'lifted' and becomes visible, as on a salver, causing the Performing Arts Centre to look like part of a light-reflection in water. The street lamps are part of a lighting project and have been deliberately placed very close to each other, forming an avenue of light so as to create a compact, modern-day streetscape.

5 Borgergade

Borgergade used to be the street of public houses and streetwalkers.

6 The Esbjerg Performing Arts Centre

The Esbjerg Performing Arts Centre, centrally located in 'Byparken' in the heart of the city, has been designed by the world-famous architects Jan and Jørn Utzon. With its 8,000 sqm, it is the central meeting place for the concert- and theatre-going public of Southwest Jutland. It also forms an exciting backdrop for trade fairs, conferences and meeting events of almost every conceivable kind. The tiles at the centre are the same as those used on the Opera House in Sydney, and in the foyer Jan and Jørn Utzon have recreated the trees removed in connection with the construction of the building as pillars.

7 Esbjerg Art Museum

The Performing Arts Centre shares its foyer with Esbjerg Art Museum and Restaurant Kunstpavillonen. Esbjerg Art Museum boasts one of Denmark's finest collections of modern art after 1920 and shows special exhibitions of contemporary art. The museum has open stores with paintings, an Aesthetic laboratory as well as a scent installation.

8 Esbjerg Water Tower

The Water Tower was built in 1896-97, based on drawings by C.H. Clausen, who has made an almost exact copy of its model: the medieval citizen's house Haus Nassau in Nürnberg. The function of the tower as a water tower was not of any major significance, but it quickly became the city's landmark. It was originally built with an observation platform on the top floor. After a considerable number of years during which the tower was not accessible, it was re-opened to the public after restoration work had been completed. Apart from offering a magnificent view of the city and harbour, marshland and sea, the tower also features changing exhibitions. Behind the tower lie parts of the old city park, where, among other things, there is a delightful open-air stage for summer entertainment.

The harbour



The Water Tower

9 Havnegade

In 1868, the State bought land for the establishment of a new harbour, with Havnegade originally marking the boundary between the town and the State-owned land – indicated at first by three plough furrows and later on by a normal fence. Havnegade later became the 'posh' street, with the expensive Hotel Royal costing DKK 2 a night and the street where well-known prosperous citizens built their houses, e.g. shipowner Ditlev Lauritzen, who was so young that he had to call his shipyard J. Lauritzen after his father. A few of the fine houses have been preserved, as, for example, No. 61, which was built by the city's first doctor O. Bruun. The Emigrant Hotel was also located here, on the corner of Smedegade, for the port not only shipped Danish products to the rest of the world but emigrants as well.

10 The Harbour

From the square in front of the beautiful harbour administration building there is a fine view of the harbour and Fanø. Just below, one can still see the small triangular harbour that was the beginning of everything – Dokhavnen, where the first ship put into port in 1873. The harbour was built for exporting livestock, although it later became the cooperative movement's import and export harbour – and from the 1890s onwards, also a fishing harbour. Today, the harbour is a base for the many offshore activities in the North Sea, so it has changed character a number of times. This can clearly be seen from up here, with the fishing harbour to the west and the blue buildings of the offshore section to the east.

11 Smedegade

Until 1966 the oldest house of Esbjerg, a smithy, was located in this street.

12 Kongensgade

Kongensgade is the main street of the city and is Denmark's longest pedestrian street. The large houses are fine examples of architecture between 1895 and 1920, built by local craftsmen who took as their models buildings found out in Europe, which they had seen when travelling as journeymen. Most of the shop windows have now changed their facades, but make sure not to miss the quite unusual door at No. 80. Or gaze up at the first and second storeys and note the balconies, cornices and columns.

Blue and pink route Esbjerg City Centre



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