

Roskilde mid-town





For more than 1000 years, Roskilde has been situated at the end of the Fjord which bears the name of the city. Roskilde is considered one of the oldest cities in the country and the city is supposedly formed around an existing fishing village in about 980, when Harald Bluetooth built a church and most likely also a royal estate. In this connection, two communities arose, Vindeboder and Skt. Jørgensbjerg. The city was granted municipal privileges in the late thirteenth century and has always been a regional centre of attention due to its geographic location.

Start in Stændertorvet

1 Stændertorvet

The western part of the city's medieval urban open space was created after hundred years of rebuilding, demolition and reconstruction. Since the Middle Ages, there has been market days twice a week, where customers can buy fruit, vegetables, flowers, various delicacies, and arts and crafts. The fountain is a gathering point for the students of Roskilde when they have received their graduation caps.

2 Skt. Laurentii

Today, it is only the church tower which is above ground. The church is now preserved as a ruin approximately two metres below ground in Stændertorvet. Its original size is marked with dark stones in the tiling away from the tower, which is the only fully preserved part of the church. The church is from the beginning of the twelfth century and was most recently excavated in the years 1931 and 1998.

Route 1: Roskilde Mid-town

The route is oriented around the most central part of the city focusing on historic buildings, squares, monuments and more.

It can take anything from less than one hour to a whole day to walk the route. An obvious longer stop on the route would be a visit to Roskilde Cathedral. And along the way there are many wonderful places where legs and mind can get a rest.

Continue along Fondens Bro down towards the Cathedral square

3 Roskilde Gymnasium

Previously known by the name of Roskilde Katedralskole (Roskilde Cathedral School), it was built in 1842 by architect Jørgen Hansen Koch. Roskilde Cathedral School was most likely founded about 1000 years ago by King Canute the Great at the same time as Roskilde Cathedral.

4 The Cathedral

The current cathedral built from bricks had two or three predecessors. The construction started in the beginning of the twelfth century. The cathedral is placed where Harald Bluetooth built his first wooden church, and where he was buried around 980. The construction of the current cathedral was initiated by bishop Absalon and is the first cathedral built from bricks in the North. For this reason and because the cathedral reflects 800 years of Danish architectural history, it was in 1995 designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Furthermore, Roskilde Cathedral has since 1535 been the preferred burial place of the Danish Royal family.

5 Kongeporten (The Kings Gate)

The Kings Gate is found at the west wall of Roskilde Cathedral. The artist, Peter Brandes, created the gate in connection with a renewal in 2010. The gate shows the 12 disciples in different symbolic depictions, and the gate is used as the exit after weddings, funerals and confirmations. It is only used as entrance at royal visits.

6 Frederik IX's burial place

In 1985, the open chapel was finished at the request of the Danish royal family, who wanted an outdoor burial place. The burial place is designed by architect Wilhelm Wohlert in collaboration with architects Inger and Johannes Exner. The bronze gate is made by Sven Havsteen-Mikkelsen. The white granite headstone is from Greenland, the paving stones from Bornholm, and the fieldstones from Faroe Islands.

Follow Skolegade

7 Skt. Hans Kilde (Sct. Hans Spring)

The spring was inaugurated for St. John the Baptist, and during medieval times it was considered a sacred spring, with the water having healing powers. When you drank from the spring, it should be from a brand new piece of pottery, which afterwards was to be thrown into the spring in order to avoid infection. The sick could spend the night by the spring and the next day walk to Skt. Hans Kirke (Saint Hans Church) at Provstevænget to express their gratitude.

Continue along Provstestræde

8 Provstemarken

The field is protected and hides fascinating traces from the medieval times of Roskilde, more specifically the missing Saint Hans parish with church residences and its own church and cemetery.

Walk along Regensstien back to the Cathedral square

9 Christian IV's Chapel

The chapel was built around 1620 as a burial place for Christian IV by architect Lorenz van Steenwinckel. The wall is decorated among other things with the death symbols of a scull, a scythe, an hourglass and a torch turned downward to indicate that the building is a burial chapel. The engraved years state the times of restoration, lastly done in 2008.

10 Absalonsbuen (the Arch of Absalon)

The arch was built in the beginning of the twelfth century as a connecting passage to ensure a dry passage between the Cathedral and the ambulatory's top floor as well as other parts of the church. The arch is built from travertine, materials from an earlier church. The building is the cathedral's oldest addition.

Entrance to Roskilde Palæ (Roskilde Palace)

11 Det Kongelige Palæ (The Royal Palace)

Roskilde's Palace is designed by architect Laurids de Thura and was built in the years 1733-1736, partially on the medieval foundations of the bishop's palace. The palace was used as accommodation for the royal family, for example during funerals in the cathedral. Today, the palace accommodates the Museum for Contemporary Art and Palæfløjen where Roskilde Art Association exhibits. In Palæfløjen you can also find the residence of the bishop of Roskilde diocese. The yard and garden of the palace is used for exhibitions, concerts and other cultural events.

Go back through the gate to Stændertorvet

12 Roar and Helge

Statue of the mythological figures Roar and Helge made from bronze and displayed in 1939. The statue is designed by artist Johan Galster. According to myth, Helge ruled at sea as a sea king while Roar ruled on land from the royal residence in Lejre and presumably founded the city of Roskilde, which according to the myth is named after him.

13 The Pope's Oak

In connection with the visit of Pope Johannes Paul II in 1989 where he was invited to attend evening prayers in the cathedral, an oak tree was planted as a symbolic gesture. The oak tree is an old symbol of peace across religious communities and religious beliefs.

14 Roskilde Convent

Parts of the building originally is from a manor from 1565, built by recycled stones from a demolished Dominican monastery. In 1698, the manor was bought by two noble widows, Berte Skeel and Margrethe Ulfeld, who, with the blessing of Christian V, founded the first noble monastery in Denmark. Today, the monastery serves as a foundation.

End of tour

The Roskilde Routes guide you around in the city

The Roskilde Routes are a number of tours of each 2-3 kilometres through Roskilde and the surrounding area, highlighting particularly interesting places along the way. The routes are themed guides for adventures in Roskilde – you can either follow the routes from the first to the last number or use them as inspiration to explore for yourself.

Roskilde offers countless cultural experiences. Roskilde Cathedral is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the wild Vikings are remembered at the Viking Ship Museum, and a party is guaranteed at Ragnarock – the museum

of pop, rock and youth culture. The town is situated centrally surrounded by unique experiences of nature in the forests, by the fjord, the lakes and Skjoldungernes Land National Park.

Numerous experiences are awaiting in the city, whether your focus is on the rich history of the city, art and culture, or on the treasure chest of nature.

Welcome to #alletiders Roskilde!