



The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living

Meik Wiking

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***New York Times* Bestseller**

Embrace Hygge (pronounced hoo-ga) and become happier with this definitive guide to the Danish philosophy of comfort, togetherness, and well-being.

Why are Danes the happiest people in the world? The answer, says Meik Wiking, CEO of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, is Hygge. Loosely translated, Hygge—pronounced Hoo-ga—is a sense of comfort, togetherness, and well-being. "Hygge is about an atmosphere and an experience," Wiking explains. "It is about being with the people we love. A feeling of home. A feeling that we are safe."

Hygge is the sensation you get when you're cuddled up on a sofa, in cozy socks under a soft throw, during a storm. It's that feeling when you're sharing comfort food and easy conversation with loved ones at a candlelit table. It is the warmth of morning light shining just right on a crisp blue-sky day.

The Little Book of Hygge introduces you to this cornerstone of Danish life, and offers advice and ideas on incorporating it into your own life, such as:

Get comfy. Take a break.

Be here now. Turn off the phones.

Turn down the lights. Bring out the candles.

Build relationships. Spend time with your tribe.

Give yourself a break from the demands of healthy living. Cake is most definitely Hygge.

Live life today, like there is no coffee tomorrow.

From picking the right lighting to organizing a Hygge get-together to dressing hygge, Wiking shows you how to experience more joy and contentment the Danish way.

The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living Details

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From Reader Review *The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living* for online ebook

Jennifer says

If 2016 was all about throwing things away a la Marie Kondo (*The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*), then 2017 seems to be all about getting cozy.

This is a beautifully designed little book which extolls the benefits of coziness/homebodyness and good friends/good food as the way to happiness. The Danes generally rank at the top (or near top) of worldwide happiness rankings. Large social safety-net programs probably play a key role in this, but since that's not easily or quickly replicated, the author advises that happiness can be found via candles, warm drinks, fireplaces and wool socks. Now, I like all of those things as much as the next person (probably more) but I'll just say that I'm glad I checked this one out from the library instead of buying this book in order to learn these pearls of wisdom.

Susan Budd says

I should begin my review of *The Little Book of Hygge* with a confession: I hate winter. I hate everything about winter. I hate the snow. I hate the cold. I hate coats and hats and mittens. The months of January and February could be wiped off the calendar for all I care. I'll take a double dose of July and August in their place. Sometimes I wish I was a bear so I could just sleep through the whole thing and wake up in the spring. So the concept of *hygge*, originating from a people long accustomed to dealing with cold weather, is not one that easily resonates with me. At least, not until I read Meik Wiking's explanation of *hygge*.

As I was reading, I spontaneously remembered my very first apartment. It was a two room apartment above a store in the heart of the village of Westbury. I furnished it with an assortment of hand-me-downs from my parents' apartment. Appropriately enough for the topic of discussion here, it was mostly the Danish Modern furniture that was so popular at midcentury.

Since the kitchen was the larger of the two rooms (the second room being the bedroom), there was ample space for a comfy old wingback chair with worn orange upholstery. It fit perfectly in a corner with an equally battered end table, a ginger jar table lamp, and a three shelf bookcase that held my then-tiny library. It became my special reading nook.

The apartment faced the street, so I could sit almost anywhere and look out at the main road of the village anytime I wanted. This was especially pleasant to do during the Christmas season when strings of lights adorned the lamp posts and store windows. This was a time before chain stores dominated the village landscape, when the stores were still all Mom & Pop stores, each with its unique personality. There was a local movie theater, a pizzeria, a delicatessen, and next door to me a card & gift shop that played Christmas carols from a speaker outside.

One day I heard what sounded like a parade going down the street, so I went to one of the windows to see what was going on and it was indeed a parade. A little parade going down my little street. I poured myself a cup of coffee, sat down at my kitchen table next to the open window, and watched the parade. It never happened again, which only served to make the experience more special.

Although I only lived there for three years, and that was over thirty years ago, I still remember it fondly: the street, the stores, the sleepy village atmosphere (even though it was only forty minutes from Penn Station by LIRR), all seen from my little perch on the second floor, and most of all, my *hyggekrog* with its comfy chair, soft light, and favorite books.

Perhaps *hygge* is not such a strange concept to me after all.

Karina Read says

Beautifully published. Gorgeous photos, charts and drawings. The writing is funny, interesting and engaging. A really fun read! So...when are we moving to Denmark??

David says

This is a delightful little book about a concept that is popular in Denmark. "Hygge" (pronounced hooga) is a concept that doesn't directly translate into English. The word might be translated as "coziness" or "happiness" or "taking pleasure from simple things." I picked up this book because I plan to go to Denmark later this summer. The country has the reputation of being the happiest place in the world. But, this is not quite true--it is really the *least unhappy* country, due to its extensive social programs and safety nets.

Denmark is a country where winters are long, and it rains 179 days a year. So, *hygge* is primarily achieved at home, on rainy days, with soft lighting, special food, and close friends and family. Lighting seems to be very important. Denmark burns two times as many candles per person than anywhere else in Europe. Fireplaces are wonderful. Electric lighting is also important, but the emphasis is on *soft* lighting, not blaring fluorescent tubes. And, another emphasis is on being in the company of small groups of people. This is very good for introverts. And, hot drinks are another important component of *hygge*.

You can read this short book in a couple of hours--at least half of it is filled with simple illustrations--reminiscent of clip art. The writing is simple, as the book explains the many facets of Danish culture that contribute to *hygge*. The book contains a description of ten inexpensive activities that can contribute to happiness. So, it is useful for anybody, not just those living in Denmark.

Remarkably, the author, Meik Wiking, is the CEO of an organization called the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen. I guess he should know a thing or two about *hygge*!

Hilary says

This book is beautifully presented, nice cover, quality paper, modern typeface, and beautiful photography. Looks like cross between an Ikea catalogue and a Waitrose food magazine. I found the content fluffy, repetitive and patronising. I'm not danish and have not previously heard of *Hygge* but am aware that candles, real fires, friends and sharing food you have cooked yourself is good fun and makes you happy. I thought the book was going to let me in on some secrets of Danish happiness, I was disappointed to find it stated the obvious, but lots of people seem to really like it.

Whispering Stories says

The Little Book of Hygge, isn't the type of book that I would normally choose to read, but something drew me to it, perking my interest. I kept on hearing about 'hygge'. Everyone was talking about it, so I decided to investigate myself, though I will admit that I was drawn to this book about the subject, rather than the artwork on the cover.

Hygge is all about living better, how to live 'in the now', calmly and more happily. According to statistics, the Danes are the happiest people on the planet, and according to the author, their 'hygge' lifestyle is the reason for this.

We are taught, and shown by the vast amount of photos in the book, how the Danes live their daily lives and how they relax. From open fires, eating tasty food, spending time with friends, riding their bikes, there are numerous ways that they feel 'hygge' everyday.

I spent quite a while reading this book, feeling the urge not to rush it, so I read a couple of chapters daily, letting the information sink in.

I loved the book, the explanations of what 'hygge' is, and how to achieve it. Yes the author does repeat himself a lot, going over about the same things, but this book isn't all about hot chocolate, and roaring fires, it is much, much more.

Will I take away anything from this book, and use it in my daily life? Maybe to use candles more. I already have lots around the house, just never light them. Apart from that I'm very doubtful. What I will take away from the book though, is the knowledge of how a lot of the Danes live, their culture and how it makes them happy.

Would I recommend this book, wholeheartedly. Now I'm off to go and feel miserable again, in this dull and cold British weather

Reviewed by Stacey on www.whisperingstories.com

marta says

The whole idea of Hygge is really lovely. Actually, I think that everybody follows it, having no idea that it has a name. Well, who doesn't enjoy the winter evening with a cup of cocoa or the fragrance of just baked cake? It is quite a nice book in terms of appreciating life's little pleasures, but it lacks actual content. The majority of the book is filled with photographs or some really boring statistics and the author doesn't say anything insightful. I mean, we all have been there, done that. Just didn't realise it has a fancy, Danish name. Nice graphic design, poor content.

Inge says

The Little Book of Hygge is a small collection of everything that is right in the world. Hygge is a term that doesn't have a literal translation in many languages, but it is a concept that everyone is familiar with: that sense of warmth, comfort, cosiness, belonging, safety. Something which the Danish have turned into a proper art form. In this little book, you will discover everything about hygge. How to hygge in summer, in winter, on a budget, in Copenhagen. Hygge is a reading nook by the fireplace with a good book and a comfortable blanket. Hygge is a cup of hot chocolate. Hygge is an intimate dinner party with board games. We should all learn how to incorporate hygge into our lives - there is a reason why the Danish are among the happiest people in the world.

As someone with anxiety and depression, I made it my personal mission to learn more about happiness and positivity. Because these things don't come naturally to me anymore, but I can train myself. I keep a gratitude journal (apparently this is very hygge). I read books about happiness. I spend a lot of time on self-care, even the unpleasant aspects of it (e.g. doctor's appointments). So when I found out about hygge, I was more than excited to learn more about it. I ordered a Buddy Box, which is a self-care subscription box. *The Little Book of Hygge* came with it, which was so perfect.

I read this book in my reading nook, with cups of tea, cookies, and several blankets. I learned about candles, discovered recipes, and smiled at beautiful pictures. This book was certainly very *hyggelig*.

Barry says

I think someone else may have pinched the title but I think this book could be called 'The Little Book of Bollocks'.

We start off with a Danish concept of Hygge (I think it is pronounced hoo-gah or something). Essentially it seems to be the notion of having comfortable spaces at home and work, feeling happy and safe and at peace. All good so far? Well yes of course, it doesn't take a genius to work out that having a favourite blanket is comforting. It makes the obvious connection that having a good home / work balance and having a strong social network is good for you. Yep, still with you.

But what underpins this is a load of consumerist crap - pages and pages of what expensive lighting, candles and furniture you should buy. Lots of stating the bloody obvious - if you are cold put some nice woollen socks on. The book is terribly middle class - it reeks of 'get away to your cabin at the weekend and enjoy some hygge'. Yes, millions of us have weekend retreats on tap...

I get that you can do hygge on the cheap and I agree totally that allowing yourself in the modern world to make time for your self and to do 'special' things and have comfort in your life is good. I don't buy that eating lots of cake is hygge or lighting a candle will transform your life. My problem with this book is that it takes some pretty universal notions and translates them into a 'lifestyle' or a 'fashion'.

This book gets two stars because it is actually very pretty and beautiful to flick through and I did have a hygge moment cuddling my 3 year old daughter whilst reading the book. She then shit herself unfortunately and ruined the moment ha ha! It annoyed me as a vegan that seemingly to get a 'hygge' moment you had to inflict pain on other creatures, there are lots of recipes in here for meat heavy dishes, you get told you may be

lucky to see a pig roast in one section and them espouses the hygge of hunting and fishing - how comforting to witness the slow charring of a once happy pig!

I think I would be more happy if I sat down with the TV off and read more, I love being warm in my home and eating nice food - unfortunately life has it's stresses too and my kids are hardly the quietest. The book does make it clear that stress won't go away, it's about creating hygge to counter it and I suppose there is some truth in this - there is a good message which is 'be kind to yourself'.

What isn't good in this book is that despite it being written by a social science the actual evidence for hygge is exceptionally tenuous. There are some giant leaps from studies that suggest Danes are happy, glosses over the socio-political elements and attributes happiness to hygge - it's not the most compelling argument for spending a month's salary on a vase...

Sylvain Reynard says

The author of this book studies human happiness. In this volume, he argues that Hygge (loosely translated as comfort or homeyness) contributes to the overall happiness and satisfaction of Danes. Then he offers an account of what Hygge includes and how to incorporate it into your daily life.

I liked this book for the window into Danish life that it offered and also for its interesting account of what contributes to happiness.

We can all do with more Hygge. We can all do with more happiness.
Recommended.
SR

Lily says

Lifecycle of an idea:

- 1) hear about it on NPR
- 2) identify with it. tell friends about it.
- 3) buy book about it.
- 4) begin reading book.
- 5) realise there are suddenly *a lot* of books on this topic.
- 6) start to suspect book is just a big advertisement put out by one of those agencies that determines what will be trendy for next season.
- 7) book seems to really want you to buy woolen socks.
- 8) book is poorly written and repeats itself.
- 9) see a new twee danish crap store in your big mall.
- 10) reach peak despair.
- 11) burn book. the crackling fire, you are told, is very hygge.
- 12) find peace with the ease with which the corporate world manipulates your interests and desires.
- 13) write a goodreads review.

Barbara says

Hygge (pronounced hoo-gah) - the Danish art of living well - has become quite trendy these days. To find out what it's all about I read 'The Little Book of Hygge' by Meik Wiking (pronounced Mike Viking). Wiking is the CEO of 'The Happiness Research Institute' - a Danish think tank that studies satisfaction, happiness, and the quality of life.

In a nutshell, hygge is a feeling of well-being that can be engendered by pleasant surroundings, tasty food, and good company.....or whatever else makes you feel safe and content. As Wiking describes it, hygge is 'an atmosphere, an experience' - what we feel when we're with people we love in a warm and comfortable place.

Things that promote hygge are called 'hyggelig.' For instance, the following would be hyggelig: a small group of friends sitting around a fireplace in a cabin, wearing big jumpers (sweaters) and wooly socks, drinking malt wine. It would be even more hyggelig if a storm was raging outside. LOL

Danish people strive to have all their life experiences be as hyggelig as possible. They try to have hyggelig homes; go to hyggelig restaurants; entertain hyggelig visitors; play hyggelig games; work at hyggelig jobs; go on hyggelig trips; etc.

A lot of creating hygge is common sense, but - if you want some pointers - Wiking provides a guide:

- Use lots of candles. The Danes place candles everywhere - in bedrooms living rooms, bathrooms, classrooms, boardrooms, etc.
- Place dim lighting in strategic locations. Wiking recommends light fixtures designed by Poul Henningsen, whose lamps provide soft, diffuse light.
- Create a feeling of togetherness with friends and relatives; togetherness is 'like a hug without touching.'
- Maintain a healthy work-life balance. Spend a lot of time with your family.
- Socialize with friends and colleagues.
- Good food. Danish people like meat and potatoes.....and they love sweets - especially cake. A traditional feature of Danish children's birthday parties is 'Cakeman' - a pastry in the shape of a large gingerbread man, decorated with flags, sweets, and candles.

In the book, Wiking includes recipes for a few of his favorite Danish dishes. One is called Skipperlabskovs (Skipper Stew), which is brisket sitting in potato mash - served with pickled beets and rye bread.

- Hot beverages. Danes love coffee. If you watch Danish TV series, the characters are always making coffee, drinking coffee, and offering each other coffee.....(like tea in British TV series....LOL)

- Comfortable clothing. For professional wear, Danish men like a T-shirt or sweater under a blazer, usually in black or gray. Danes don't favor three-piece-suits. For casual wear, Danes like a comfortable jumper.....with leggings for girls or skinny jeans for boys. And Danes LOVE scarves.

- Casual hairdos. Danish hairstyles are 'wake up and go'.....or maybe a loose bun for women.

- Comfortable furnishings. Danes enjoy interior decorating, and their decor often includes wood furniture, vintage items, and an open fireplace and/or a wood-burning stove.

- Blankets and cushions. Necessary for snuggling up and getting cozy.

After providing this overview of hygge, Wiking goes on to talk about how to be hyggelig outside the home; during every month of the year - from January to December; and during every season of the year. Wiking also describes various hyggelig experiences he's had with his friends, and writes about his happiness research.

Wiking's suggestions for hyggelig pastimes include things like: spend a weekend in a cabin; have a cooking party with your friends; go out on a rowboat and bring a picnic basket; put couches in your office; have a movie night - with popcorn; go to a hyggelig restaurant and order pickled herring and schnapps; buy confections at a bakery; enjoy exhibitions of Christmas lights; have smorrebrod (an open sandwich on rye bread) with beer or schnapps; read a good book; and so on.

You can probably think up hundreds of 'hyggelig' activities yourself. For example, here's one: invite a couple of friends over; watch Netflix; bring in Mexican food; drink sangria....and later on - have chocolate eclairs for dessert. If you have some hygge suggestions, feel free to comment below.

Wiking sums up his treatise on hygge by noting that a complete hygge experience includes 'taste, sound, smell, and texture.'

- Hyggelig tastes are familiar and sweet.

= Hyggelig sounds might be: the crackling of burning wood; the pitter patter of raindrops; and trees waving in the breeze.

- Hyggelig smells could be aromas that trigger fond memories.

- Hyggelig textures might be wooden surfaces; smooth ceramic cups; and reindeer fur.

I feel like I gained a pretty good understanding of hygge from Wiking's book. However, Wiking's numerous suggestions for 'hyggelig experiences' got very repetitive.....and after awhile, it seemed like a lot of padding to have enough words for an entire book.

Still, if you're curious about hygge, this is a good crash course.

You can follow my reviews at <https://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot...>

Vanessa says

4.5 stars.

This book made me so incredibly happy while reading it. The phenomenon and idea of hygge is something that appeals to my very soul, and it is something that I want to try and implement far more in my life than I already am. As my main resolution for this year is to stay happy, it seems inevitable that I would work towards the hygge lifestyle.

This book is much better than the previous hygge book that I read last year - it is written by Meik Wiking who is the CEO of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, so it feels inevitable that he would know exactly what he is talking about. An element of this book that really made me geek out and fall in love were all the statistics from various surveys that the Institute had carried out, which showed people's general opinions on various aspects of hygge. I liked seeing the evidence of people's feelings and how they implemented hygge in their lives.

The book itself is absolutely beautiful, full of gorgeous photographs and illustrations, and is a joy to read through. I felt a genuine sense of happiness and cosiness as I read through this, curled up on my sofa with plenty of cushions and a mug of tea by my side. I tried to space out my reading and savour the book, but unfortunately I was far too involved to do so!

My only issue with this book, and thus the reason I knocked it down a half star, is because I felt that at times it was a little too focused on activities that were accessible to Danish people. Of course hygge is a Danish phenomenon, and I loved finding out the statistics on many things (for example how many candles Danish people burn weekly!), but at times I felt like the tips on how to implement hygge elements in my life were just out of reach, based on where I live. However, it was only a slight qualm, and there is plenty in this book for me to try and experience, with numerous recipes, ideas for social occasions, and other such things that I can try out.

Overall I thought this was a great book, and as I received it as a present I would also say this would make a great gift to anyone who likes the cosier, quieter side of life and wants to implement more hygge in their lifestyle. A wonderful reading experience.

Helene Jeppesen says

This "Little Book of Hygge", written by the CEO of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, sets out to explore the Danish phenomenon 'hygge': What it is and how you can achieve it. It's always fascinating to read about your own people, but to me this petite book was even more fascinating because it explores something that I consider a constant and a necessity in my everyday life.

The question is: Do I agree with everything in this book? Does it give you an honest impression of Danes' lives, happiness and how we 'hygge'? The answer is: Yes! I couldn't find any faults with this book, and I was so impressed with how it defined 'hygge' spot-on that I've been inspired to do a video on just this phenomenon.

If you desire to know more about how to create a 'hyggelig' atmosphere in your home or around people, definitely read this book. It speaks the truth and encaptures the real spirit of 'Hygge', and it doesn't hurt that the book is beautifully designed and comes with gorgeous pictures.

Amanda says

The Danish concept of hygge (pronounced HOO-GA) originates from a Norwegian word meaning "well-being." The closest translation for hygge in English is coziness. In a nutshell, the primary elements include candles and fireplaces, intimate gatherings, lots of cake and coffee, warm fabrics, books, and rustic settings.

The word hygge can be used as a noun or a verb. One interesting part of the book was the hygge dictionary.

Variations of the word hygge include the following:

hyggehjørnet- to be in the mood for hygge

hyggekrog- sitting nook for a "hyggelig" time

hyggesnak- cozy conversation devoid of controversy

hyggestund- a moment of hygge

(And my personal favorite)

hyggebukser- that favorite comfortable pair of pants you'd never wear in public

I adore the idea that hygge is about "atmosphere and experience" rather than "things." Denmark consistently ranks at the top of happiness indices. The author attributes the happiness levels of the Danish people to the lower levels of stress because the government provides universal health coverage, free university education, and generous benefits. Other factors noted include good incomes and a real sense of community.

I'd rate this book 3.5. I always find books about happiness intriguing. It's a really quick read, and my only complaint would be that at times it felt repetitive. I enjoyed the cutesy artwork.
