

Copenhagen offers tourists rewards for 'green' fun

Copenhagen is offering free food, ice cream and cruise tours to tourists who get involved in eco-friendly activities

AP

Tourists visiting Copenhagen this summer are encouraged to participate in unusual kinds of vacation fun, including plucking floating trash from the Danish capital's waterways, cycling to museums instead of going by car, or volunteering at an urban garden.

All these activities are part of a new, four-week pilot project called CopenPay that rewards tourists for "climate-friendly actions."

"We must turn tourism from being an environmental burden into a force for positive change," said Mikkel Aarø-Hansen, CEO of tourist board Wonderful Copenhagen, which runs the scheme.

"We want visitors to make conscious, green choices and hopefully end up getting even better experiences while they visit," Aarø-Hansen said in a statement earlier this month.

Among the more than 20 attractions participating in the project is the envi-

ronmental non-profit organization GreenKayak which offers water tours for tourist volunteers. They can paddle through Copenhagen's 17th-century waterways aboard green-colored kayaks, plucking floating trash from the water. One main sailing lane heads out to the Baltic Sea.

"When you are in the ocean, you get invested in the ocean. So, I hope that will keep inspiring people to not leave trash in the ocean," Elisabeth Friis Larsen, a spokeswoman for GreenKayak, told AP.

Elsewhere, tourists can trim flower beds, harvest coriander or feed chickens at Oens Have urban garden, then stay for a complimentary lunch. Or get free ice cream if they cycle or take public transport to the country's National Museum instead of going by taxi or rental car to reduce emissions.

Visitors to SMK, Denmark's National Gallery, can attend workshops where they're taught how to transform plastic waste into jellyfish sculptures.

"The whole idea was that people should bring their own plastic waste. And out of that, the children will build a jellyfish," explained workshop leader, artist Susanne Brigitte Lund.

Copenhagen's climate-friendly vacationers' project—which began on 15 July and is set to wrap up on 11 August—comes as the world's top destinations are grap-



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The Nyhavn harbor area in Copenhagen; and (right) SMK, National Gallery of Denmark..

pling with the burdens of mass tourism. Copenhagen also gets its fair share of tourists with more than 12 million overnight stays last year.

Amid demonstrations and protestors firing water pistols at visitors in Spain, Barcelona City Hall announced last month that it would not renew any tourist apart-

ment licenses after they expire in 2028.

Italy's Venice recently extended a pilot programme charging day trippers a five-euro (\$5.45) entrance fee to the fragile lagoon city. And the town of Fujikawaguchiko recently constructed a large black screen to block the view of Japan's iconic Mount Fuji. The reason:



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Spain said the CopenPay scheme is a "really good idea," but only if visitors have the time. "It depends how long you're going to stay in the city. But if you're here for more than two days then yeah," she said. "It's also a really nice way of seeing, interacting with the city."

Veira was aware of the city's climate-supporting programs, but did not participate in any of them because she was visiting Copenhagen for one day only and didn't have enough time.

Many others, however, admit to leaving their green principles at home, once summer holidays come around.

"I think about it when I'm at home, but when I travel, I do think about convenience more," said Caroline Kranefuss from Boston.

University of Copenhagen researcher Berit Charlotte Kaae said the CopenPay scheme is interesting because it "puts some action to the concept of sustainability."

"It's interesting to give this hands-on experience," she said. But in order to address the true environmental problems of mass tourism, tourism authorities must look to the source—transportation.

"We need to work more on aviation fuels, maybe better train service, to avoid the short distance flights," she said.

misbehaving foreign tourists.

On a recent busy summer weekend, tourists thronged Copenhagen's historic Nyhavn harbor area, as sightseeing ferries squeezed down its narrow waterway, packed with smartphone-snapping passengers.

Tourist Fiona Veira from northwest

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