

= Esbjerg =

Esbjerg (/ ˈɛsbjɜːr / , / ˈɛsbjʊːr / ; Danish : [ˈɛsb̥ ʝæ ? ʔ ?] ; West Jutish dialect : [ˈɛsb̥ ʔæa ?]) is a seaport town and seat of Esbjerg Municipality on the west coast of the Jutland peninsula in southwest Denmark . By road , it is 71 kilometres (44 mi) west of Kolding and 164 kilometres (102 mi) southwest of Aarhus . With an urban population of 71 @, @ 618 (as of 1 January 2016) , it is the fifth @-@ largest city in Denmark , and the largest in west Jutland .

Before a decision was made to establish a harbour (now the second largest in Denmark) at Esbjerg in 1868 , the area consisted of only a few farms . Esbjerg developed quickly with the population rising to 13 @, @ 000 by 1901 and 70 @, @ 000 by 1970 . In addition to its fishing and shipping activities , it also became an important centre for agricultural exports . Over the years , many of the city 's visitors have arrived by ferry from Harwich , Essex , England , but this service closed in September 2014 having run since 1875 . The harbour facilities are being expanded to answer the needs of the wind @-@ turbine industry and container shipping traffic . Esbjerg is served by Esbjerg Airport with flights to Aberdeen , Scotland and Stavanger , Norway .

The town has several notable museums and entertainment venues , including Esbjerg Art Museum , Esbjerg Museum and the privately owned Fisheries and Maritime Museum . The Esbjerg Performing Arts Centre was completed in 1997 to designs by Jan and Jørn Utzon . When approached by sea , the Man Meets the Sea is one of the prominent monuments , consisting of four 9 @-@ metre @-@ tall (27 feet) white @-@ coloured men , overlooking Sædding Beach . The sculpture was designed by Svend Wiig Hansen and installed in 1995 . It hosts branches of the University of Southern Denmark and Aalborg University , Esbjerg is increasingly recognized for its university facilities and sporting activities . It is home to the Danish football club Esbjerg fB , who play their home matches at Blue Water Arena , and also has an ice hockey division called Esbjerg Elite Ishockey , which plays at the Granly Hockey Arena .

= = History and economy = =

Esbjerg 's oldest existing house , on the corner of Kongensgade , was built around 1660 . The town itself was not established until 1868 when it was built as a replacement for the harbour in Altona , which had previously been Denmark 's most important North Sea port but came under German control after the Second Schleswig War in 1864 . At the time , Esbjerg consisted of only a few farms . Developed under royal decree from 1868 until 1874 , the harbour was officially opened in 1874 , with rail connections to Varde and to Fredericia , an important hub on the east coast of Jutland . Initial planning of the town was conducted by chartered surveyor H. Wilkens in 1870 with streets laid out in the form of a rectangular grid . The market square (Torvet) was positioned at the centre , midway between the harbour and the railway station . From only 400 inhabitants at the beginning of the 1870s , the town and its population grew rapidly , with 1529 residents mentioned in 1880 , and 4 @, @ 211 in 1890 .

In 1893 , Esbjerg became a municipality in its own right (initially known as Esbjerg Ladeplads) , receiving the status and privileges of a market town in 1899 and incorporating the parish of Jerne (east of the centre) in 1945 . A number of institutions and facilities were soon established , including the courthouse and town hall (1891) , the gas and waterworks (1896) and the power plant (1907) . From the beginning of the 20th century , Esbjerg prospered not only as a fishing port but became one of the country 's major export centres . Established in 1895 by nine local dairies , the butter @-@ packaging factory , Dansk Andels Smørpakteri , employed some 150 workers until 1920 , packing and dispatching butter for the London market . It was later extended to include egg marketing under the name Dansk Andels Æggesport . Ultimately , it handled produce from 140 dairies spread across the whole of Jutland . After the Second World War , the town developed several agricultural industries , especially meat processing and packaging with a plant employing over 300 . The slaughterhouse and meat packaging facility , Esbjerg Andels @-@ Slakteri , established in 1887 , became Denmark 's sixth largest by 1962 . It later became part of Vestjyske Slakterier in 1986 , and in 2001 , it was acquired by Danish Crown .

Once Denmark 's principal fishing port , the Port of Esbjerg is still a driving force for the town 's economy . While it has a long history of ferry services to England , the town is by no means a tourist destination . Lonely Planet remarked that " nobody comes to Esbjerg for a holiday , in fact , as with many industrial ports , most visitors rush through as quickly as possible " . Esbjerg is the main town for Denmark 's oil and offshore activities , with companies like Maersk , Ramboll , Stimwell Services , ABB , Schlumberger , COWI and Atkins all having offshore @-@ related activities in the town . Halliburton has an office in Esbjerg . The port has served the Danish offshore industry since oil and gas were first extracted from the North Sea in the early 1970s . More recently , it has become a centre for shipping offshore wind turbines . In addition to handling 65 percent of all Danish wind turbines , which supply 3 gigawatts (4 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 hp) of offshore wind power , components have been shipped to various British wind farms . In order to cope with enormous future increases in Danish offshore wind power , 12 companies , including DONG Energy and Bluewater Energy Services are already planning the establishment of a Green Offshore Centre in Esbjerg . In connection with this , in June 2013 , the port was significantly expanded with the opening of the Østhavn (East Harbour) , covering an area of 650 @,@ 000 m² (7 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 sq ft) .

Historically , in addition to its success as a fishing port , Esbjerg established its position as one of the country 's major export centres . Before World War II , there was a large butter factory , Dansk Andels Smørpakteri , employing some 150 workers while after the war the town developed agricultural industries , especially for meat processing and packaging with a plant employing over 300 . Latterly owned by Danish Crown and employing 500 , the plant closed in May 2012 .

More recently , Esbjerg has grown into an important centre for education with campuses belonging to the University of Southern Denmark (1998) and Aalborg University (1995) . The town holds an annual music festival spanning two weekends (nine days) in mid @-@ August . It is focused around the central Torvet Square which hosts the main stage . The music includes everything from church concerts to opera and pop .

= = Geography = =

The town is situated on the southwestern coast of Denmark , and is a port on the North Sea . By road , it is 71 kilometres (44 mi) west of Kolding , 164 kilometres (102 mi) southwest of Aarhus , 298 kilometres (185 mi) west of Copenhagen and 274 kilometres (170 mi) southwest of Aalborg . By sea , it is situated roughly 380 miles (610 km) northeast of Harwich , England . As a result of planned development , the older sections of the town look like a chessboard with long , wide streets with rectangular corners .

The high ground of Esbjerg stretches along the east coast of the Wadden Sea (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site) between the rivers of Varde and Sneum , encompassing the coastal area of Ho Bugt and the seaside district of Hjerting to the north . Opposite Esbjerg , across Fanø Bay , is the island of Fanø , 16 kilometres (9 @.@ 9 mi) by 5 kilometres (3 @.@ 1 mi) , with Nordby as its principal settlement , connected to Esbjerg by ferry . To the west of Esbjerg , the town boundary is defined by a number of small streams . The highest point is some 25 m (82 ft) above sea level . The town is located on top of steep slopes leading down to the flatlands of the harbour area . The built @-@ up area itself is not very hilly but there are considerable differences in terrain . Apart from the cliff in the town park overlooking the harbour , the valley of Fourfelt Bæk , 1 @.@ 2 kilometres (0 @.@ 75 mi) in length , is the main feature of the landscape , resulting in differences of up to 20 m (66 ft) with the surroundings .

= = Climate = =

= = Demographics and administration = =

As of 1 January 2014 , Esbjerg has a population of 71 @,@ 618 , making it the fifth @-@ largest city in Denmark , and the largest in west Jutland . Until the harbour was developed in the 1860s , the

area was sparsely inhabited with just a few farms . Thereafter , it grew rapidly : by 1880 , there were some 1 @, @ 500 inhabitants , rising to some 13 @, @ 000 by 1901 when it was already larger than neighbouring Varde and Ribe . By the end of the 1950s , with almost 60 @, @ 000 inhabitants , it had become Denmark 's fifth @- @ largest city . By 1970 , Esbjerg had seen a fivefold increase in population since 1901 , reaching some 70 @, @ 000 . After 1970 , the increase in population slowed , reaching a maximum of 18 @, @ 023 in 1998 .

In contrast to Denmark 's four largest cities (Copenhagen , Aarhus , Aalborg and Odense) where there were substantial increases in population between the first quarter of 2013 and the first quarter of 2014 , Esbjerg Municipality experienced an increase of only 44 inhabitants (from 115 @, @ 051 to 115 @, @ 095) over the same period . In May 2014 , Esbjerg was noted to be one of the least attractive of Denmark 's top 20 cities for house purchases and apartment rentals , dropping to 19th place , along with Herning .

Esbjerg 's city council for the period January 2014 to December 2017 consists of 31 members , 15 of whom are Venstre , Liberal Party of Denmark and nine , Social Democrats . The mayor , also from the Venstre , Liberal Party , is Johnny Søtrup , who has been major of both the former municipality in the period 1994 to 2006 and subsequently in the expanded municipality since the beginning of 2007 . There are also eight special committees which prepare the work of the council covering the areas of finance , labour market , health , children & family , culture & leisure , planning & environment , social services , and technology & supply .

= = = Mayors of Esbjerg since 1898 = = =

Mayors of Esbjerg since 1898 :

= = Landmarks = =

The Courthouse on the main square was designed by Hans Christian Amberg and completed in 1892 when the town had only 4 @, @ 000 inhabitants . The red @- @ brick building with stepped gables , round @- @ arched windows and a tower reaching 30 m (98 ft) in height resembles a medieval castle . After comprehensive renovation work in 2010 , it is now used as a venue for weddings and houses the tourist office .

Man Meets the Sea (Mennesket ved Havet) is a monument of four 9 @- @ metre @- @ tall (27 feet) white @- @ coloured men located to the west of Esbjerg , overlooking Sædding Beach . One of the area 's major tourist attractions , the sculpture was designed by Svend Wiig Hansen and installed on 28 October 1995 . It was funded by the Esbjerg Municipality authorities , the Kunstfond arts foundation and private sponsors to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the municipality in 1994 . The monument can be seen by ferry leaving or entering Esbjerg .

The water tower from 1895 was designed by Christian Hjerrild Clausen who had been inspired by Nuremberg 's medieval Nassauer Haus . Standing at the top of a cliff , it commands excellent views of the city and the harbour from its platform which is open to the public . The imposing old Courthouse Building on the central square with its tall tower and stepped gables has recently been fully renovated . A bronze equestrian statue of Christian IX , the founder of Esbjerg , stands at the centre of the square .

The largest hotel in Esbjerg is Hotel Britannica . Other hotels include Danhostel Esbjerg in a former high school about 3 kilometres (1 @. @ 9 mi) to the northwest of the city , and Hotel Ansgar on Skolegade . Most of the restaurants in Esbjerg are to the east of Torvet . Of particular note are Sand 's Restaurant which serves Danish cuisine such as smørrebrød , meatballs , smoked eels and the fried beef patty pariserbof , and the Paddy Go Easy Irish pub near the main square . Housed in a listed building on the main square , Dronning Louise serves everything from full meals to sandwiches and occasionally offers live music .

= = = Churches = = =

The first church to be built in Esbjerg was the red @-@ brick Church of Our Saviour designed by Axel Møller , which was completed in 1887 . In 1896 , it was expanded with transepts and galleries on either side of the nave , doubling the seating capacity . Several more churches were established after the Second World War when there was a marked increase in the city 's population . The first of these , the yellow @-@ brick Trinity Church with its large triangular stained @-@ glass windows , was designed to accommodate a large congregation while offering additional facilities for both young and old . Breaking with tradition , its square @-@ shaped nave was built directly adjacent to lower ancillary buildings including a hall with a stage , meeting rooms and a kitchen . The bell tower stands alone , quite separate from the church .

St Nikolaj is a Roman Catholic church , built in 1969 . Unusual for a church , it is built of aerated concrete . Its innovative square @-@ shaped design by Johan Otto von Spreckelsen served as a basis for his Grande Arche in Paris . The dimensions of the inner cube of St Nikolaj Church are very close to those of the " holy of holies " in Solomon 's Temple as described in Ezekiel 40 : 5 .

The modern red @-@ brick Grundtvig 's Church , southeast of the town centre , was designed by Ole Nielsen . With its strangely shaped , red @-@ tiled roof , it was completed in 1969 . Inside , the large wall surfaces are broken only by 12 narrow windows on the east side , creating a contrast with the much brighter tower room which opens into the chancel with light entering from a window high on the east side of the tower .

Designed by Inger and Johannes Exner , Sædden Church with wave @-@ like folds in its red @-@ brick walls was inaugurated in 1978 . Daylight focusing on the altar is supplemented by 803 electric light bulbs . Gjesing Church , a red @-@ brick building north of the city centre , was completed 1983 . Like many other modern churches in the area , it has a free @-@ standing bell tower as well as a church hall and meeting rooms . Other churches include Zion 's Church and Jerne Church .

Also built in a style akin to the Neo @-@ Gothic architecture of churches , the Bethania Mission House opposite the Church of our Saviour was completed in 1906 by Clausen .

= = = Museums and theatres = = =

The municipality has a number of museums , libraries and music and drama venues . The Esbjerg Performing Arts Centre (Musikhuset Esbjerg) is a complex with two auditoriums . Its concert hall , with seating for over 1 @, @ 100 , can also be adapted for theatrical productions . Completed in 1997 to designs by Jan Utzon and his father , it hosts classical concerts , opera , family shows and drama productions . Located in the City Park close to the harbour , it forms part of a complex which includes the Esbjerg Art Museum (Esbjerg Kunstmuseum) displaying works from artists including Asger Jorn . The museum also regularly hosts temporary international exhibitions .

The privately owned Fisheries and Maritime Museum , which opened in 1968 , consists of a saltwater aquarium and a sealarium as well as indoor and outdoor exhibitions on Danish fisheries and shipping . Esbjerg Museum in the city centre has permanent collections covering the history of the city and the surrounding region . It includes displays from the Iron Age and the Viking Period as well as a large exhibition of amber . The Printing Museum traces the history of the art of printing from the beginning of the 20th century until it was replaced by modern technology . The collection includes a variety of machines and equipment used to print books and newspapers , mainly from Germany and Denmark . The Lightship Museum (Museumsfyrskib) in the harbour is open to the public on board the Horns Rev lightship . Dating from 1912 , the Horns Rev , also known as Motorfyrskibet Nr. 1 , is the world 's oldest and best preserved motor lightship . It houses an impressive exhibition of life and work on board .

= = Education and sport = =

Esbjerg is one of the towns hosting the University of Southern Denmark . It also houses a branch of Aalborg University and IT Academy West . The main branch of Profession School ? University College West (Danish : Professionshøjskolen University College Vest) and the Esbjerg section of the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts , housed in a former power station , are also located in the

city . The town is served by the Southwest Jutland Hospital (Sydvestjysk Sygehus) which also has a branch in Brande and treats over 42 @, @ 000 patients annually , with over 500 beds and a staff of about 2 @, @ 500 employees .

Esbjerg is home to the Danish football club Esbjerg fB , established in 1924 and known as EfB for short . The club has won the Danish Championship five times , in 1961 , 1962 , 1963 , 1965 and 1979 . Esbjerg fB play their home matches at Blue Water Arena . Esbjerg also has an ice hockey division called Esbjerg Elite Ishockey which plays at the Granly Hockey Arena . Granly Hockey Arena was built in 1976 and has a seating capacity for 3417 people . In 2011 the arena was the venue for the 2011 Capital One World Women 's Curling Championship .

Rugby in Esbjerg is represented by Esbjerg RK , who play at Guldager Idrætscenter . Esbjerg also has its own Speedway team , which were crowned Danish League Champions in 2012 .

= = Transport = =

The port town of Esbjerg is a large transport hub for both rail and road traffic , and an important port for Danish North Sea oil offshore activity . It is also served by Esbjerg Airport with flights to Aberdeen and Stavanger , while the nearby Billund Airport offers additional travel options .

Esbjerg Station is operated by Danish State Railways . The station is the western terminus of InterCity trains from Copenhagen (operating once an hour) , with a journey time of about three hours . DSB also operates local trains to Fredericia . Arriva operates the Vestbanen with local trains travelling south to Ribe and Tønder and north to Struer .

Ferry services connect Esbjerg via Ho Bugt to Nordby on the island of Fanø via Danske Færger . From 1875 until 2014 a passenger service operated over the North Sea to the English port of Harwich via DFDS Seaways , formerly Scandinavian Seaways . The MS Winston Churchill began service between the two ports in 1967 , and served until 1978 when it was transferred to the River Tyne to Gothenburg service . The crossings were discontinued at the end of September 2014 although a freight service is still available on the route from Esbjerg to Immingham . DFDS cited " dwindling demand and high costs " as the chief reasons for the closure of the route .

Esbjerg Harbour is the second largest harbour in Denmark (after Aarhus) . It serves Maersk Drilling headquarters , and the regional commuter Esbjerg ? Fanø ? Esbjerg . For those arriving by pleasure craft , there is a marina along Pier No. 1 with 198 mooring places . The 650 @, @ 000 square metres (7 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 sq ft) Østhavn (? East Harbour ?) opened in June 2013 , while construction of a new freight terminal in the Sydhavn section of the harbour is scheduled for 2014 .

= = International relations = =

= = = Twin towns ? Sister cities = = =

Esbjerg is twinned with :