

Welcome to Vestskoven



Practical information:

Places where you can eat your packed-lunch: There are wooden huts with tables and benches by Herstedhøje hill, Oxbjerget hill, Mønterne and Kridtbjerget. Here you can eat your packed lunch in shelter.

Bonfire huts: There are bonfire huts by Stuekær, Lindegården, Hakonsøen, the nature center at Herstedhøje hill and at Lundshedevej. Here you can light a fire in shelter and enjoy your packed lunch. You must bring your own firewood or find it in the forest by the huts.

Bonfire sites: In many places bonfire sites have been established where you can light your own fire. Bring your own coal or collect firewood in the forest.

The forest playground and other facilities for children: The Forest and Nature Agency has made a nature playground (see map) where children can climb, crawl and play under the trees. Tarzan swings and footbridges have been put up around Vestskoven and large climbing trees etc. have been planted. You can read more (in Danish) in the pamphlet: "Der er så fuld af sjov...Vestskoven" (It is so much fun...Vestskoven).

Kringelstien path: In the most Northern part of the forest by Ballerupvej, the Forest and Nature Agency has laid a path, which winds through the forest. The path is surfaced and therefore suitable for those who have difficulty walking and wheelchair users.

Further information: Vestskoven is run by the Danish Forest and Nature Agency - Regional Office East Zealand, tel. +45 44 35 00 35, email: oestsjaelland@sns.dk. See also (in Danish) www.skovognatur.dk/oestsjaelland.

• Vestskoven



The series »Nature trails« comprises pamphlets on selected nature areas. The pamphlets are available at libraries, tourist information offices and at the entrances to many of the areas. See also (in Danish) www.skovognatur.dk.

The Ministry of the Environment

The Danish Forest and Nature Agency

- manages State-owned forests and other nature areas in Denmark
- manages with respect for recreational activities, wood production and the protection of natural and cultural assets.

The Danish Forest and Nature Agency manages 190,000 ha of forest and other natural areas

Vestskoven



Danish Ministry of the Environment
Forest and Nature Agency
Nature trails No. 32E

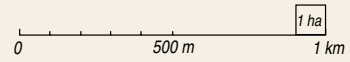
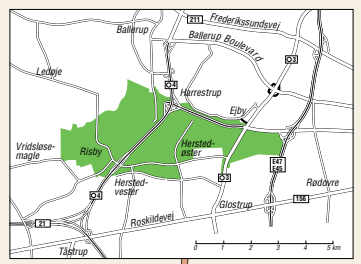


Vestskoven



- Key to map symbols**
- Public road, vehicles allowed
 - Forest road, no vehicles allowed
 - Forest track, path
 - Watercourse
 - Forest
 - Open areas
 - Private area, no public access
 - Meadow
 - Lake
 - Off-leash dog area
 - Parking
 - Bonfire/barbecue
 - Bonfire hut
 - Picnic hut
 - Forest playground
 - Viewing tower
 - Primitive facilities for overnight stays
 - Campsite
 - Highland cattle
 - Bridge/tunnel
 - The museum at Kroppedal
 - Kringelstien path
 - Footpath

BEWARE of fire hazards
 PROTECT the forest and its assets
 DO NOT THROW litter in the forest
 DOGS must be in a leash



A forest rises up in western Copenhagen

On 31 March 1967 the Danish Parliament decided to establish a forest (Vestskoven) in western Copenhagen of approximately 1,500 ha. In 1936 there were already plans to establish a forest, but it was not until the editor Hakon Stephensen wrote the feature "Let's plant a tree" in 1961 that a strong popular feeling for the forest arose.

Since 1967 the Danish state has been purchasing land for Vestskoven. The primary object of establishing Vestskoven was to create a recreational area between the rapidly growing urban areas in western Copenhagen. Therefore, planners of Vestskoven wanted to create the most varying landscape possible - a landscape of open forest with large areas of open grassland, artificial hills as well as mounds, lakes and many pathways and roads. On the map, the different areas in Vestskoven are indicated with various colours according to their use. Changes are still taking place, such as new plantings, landscaping, purchase of new areas etc.

The rich soil

The soil in Vestskoven is very clayey (argilliferous). This means that it is very nutrition-rich. In the Stone Age, farmers discovered that this type of soil was very fertile compared with the more ordinary topsoil. Therefore, since the New Stone Age and up to the present day, people have lived in this area and have reaped plentiful harvests from the soil. The visible traces of the early farmers are now very few and far between, because the soil has been under constant cultivation. The new generation has ploughed away the traces of previous generations.

The trees

Today Vestskoven's trees are becoming very large. The trees are therefore being thinned out, so there will be more space around the best trees and these are allowed to grow further with large crowns and thick trunks. For the moment the wood harvested is sold as firewood, but in the long term it will also be used for furniture, floors and houses. The image of trees planted in long lines is slowly fading away, to be replaced by randomly scattered trees with an undergrowth of bushes and smaller saplings. The next generation of trees has grown up in many places.

Herstedhøje hill

This hill is one of the largest man-made hills in Denmark, and has been formed since 1968 by moving more than three million cubic metres of soil and rubble from excavations and redevelopments of the Greater Copenhagen area. There is an impressive view of Vestskoven from the highest point of the hill (67m above sea level). You can identify various landscape elements from the top by using the sighting disc on the large stone. Towards the East you can see the towers and buildings of Copenhagen and towards the South you can see the limestone cliffs of Stevns Klint in clear weather. Towards the West you can see Roskilde Cathedral and towards the North, the Hareskov forests. Herstedhøje is beautiful when it is snowing and a good place to go sledging and skiing.



Herstedhøje

The nature centre at Herstedhøje

A nature centre with an exhibition, a café and classrooms has been built at the foot of Herstedhøje hill. There are bonfire sites and huts outside the centre, where you can enjoy your packed lunch and warm yourself in the glow of a bonfire. Inside the centre information is available on exciting excursions in Vestskoven. The nature centre is an obvious place to start and end a trip. You can engage in the various activities at the centre all year round.

The wild animals of Vestskoven

Currently all the common animal species found in Danish forests live in Vestskoven. There are large populations of roe deer as well as foxes, squirrels and badgers. Birds have also settled in Vestskoven, and now you can also see all the common woodland birds. Even goshawks, sparrow hawks and common buzzards are now common in the forest. The most characteristic bird of the forest is the magpie, which is seen everywhere. The kestrel is flies like a swirling helicopter chasing mice and large insects in the tall grass above the open landscape. During autumn and winter the many hedges are filled with migratory birds from the rest of Scandinavia. These include large flocks of fieldfares and waxwings. The birds gorge themselves with the many berries from bushes and trees.



The highland cattle

On the open grassland by the nature school you can see the grazing highland cattle. These are very hardy animals which can tolerate any kind of weather. They calve without problem and are very gentle. The highlanders of the forest are prize winning highlanders at cattle shows, and their calves are very popular with other breeders in Europe.

A. Kroppedal. The museum for astronomy – modern times – archaeology. The museum houses an outstanding astronomy exhibition and changing special exhibitions. Guided tours, presentations and activities are occasionally arranged. See the daily papers and (in Danish and German) www.kroppedal.dk.

B. Ole Rømer's land observatory. In 1978 the "Observatorium Tusculanum" from 1704 was found, where Ole Rømer's two most important instruments - the meridian circle and the equinox instrument - were set up. With the meridian circle, Ole Rømer tried to prove that the Earth orbits the Sun.

C. St. Vejleådal and Porsemosen. In the period 1950-1970 a number of bog areas West of Copenhagen were preserved, and together with Vestskoven they provide valuable landscapes in a densely built-up area. The bogs used to be shallow-water lakes, but have become low-level bogs due to overgrowing. While Porsemosen is now completely overgrown by birch broom, willow scrub and alder thicket, the cattle on the meadows by St. Vejleå have prevented the beautiful meadows from becoming overgrown with bushes and trees.

D. The Viking village. By the car park West of Risby, the municipality of Albertslund has planned to build a number of copies of pit houses and long houses from the Iron Age. The village is used by schools and gives children the opportunity to experience "the presence of history" at first hand.

E. The nature school. In Staldlængen (stable wing) at the farm Petersborggård, the municipalities of Albertslund and Glostrup have established a nature school for schoolchildren from the two municipalities in collaboration with the Danish Forest and Nature Agency. Hundreds of children come here every year to learn about nature and how to use and protect it. Each year the nature school holds open-house events with activities for visitors. Read more (in Danish) at the website: www.vestskovens-naturskole.dk

F. Harrestrup Mose. This area is known for its rich bird life. During spring you can hear singing from many different songbirds; the nightingale is just one of the birds that warbles here. Even very shy species are here such as the greylag goose, the red-necked grebe and little grebe, the grasshopper warbler and moorhen. Even the rare water rail screeches its characteristic "piglet squeak" during the early summer nights. There is a good view of the bog from the bird tower.

G. The pear orchard. By letting sheep into an old overgrown pear orchard, it was possible to create a dry grassland with old pear and apple trees as well as self-planted hawthorn and roses. There is access to the area over stiles, and visitors are welcome to pick the fruit.

H. The Oxbjerget hill is a man-made hill like Herstedhøje hill. Within the fencing around the hill, dogs are allowed to run without a leash, if controlled.

I. The Hvissinge rock. When excavating a water main through the area in 1966, a large rock was struck. It turned out to be the largest rock on Sealand, weighing about 205 tonnes. The rock had to be blown into pieces, but at the last minute it was possible to raise money to lift the rock away. Today it lies to the North of the village of Hvissinge, and you can still see the holes drilled on top of it, which should have been filled with explosives.



Hvissingestenen